MEMOIRS OF LINCOLN

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MEMOIRS OF LINCOLN MAPLETON IA
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WITHDRAWN

Presented to Raymond Warren
Feb. 11-1931 Marking an
acquaintance made on the occasion
of our visit to the
Lincoln Memorial Foundation
at Fort Wayne Ind.
A. Scott Peterson

To Raymond Warren
from W. H. Christmas
Mapleton Iowa
Feb 12th 1901.

MEMOIRS OF LINCOLN

by

HERRING CHRISMAN

Published by His Son

WILLIAM HERRING CHRISMAN

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FOREWORD

These articles from the pen of my father, Herring Chrisman, are submitted to all those interested in Abraham Lincoln, his forbears, and his contemporaries. They were written in the year 1900 as a family record and my principal motive in republishing them is to establish in the line of Lincoln ancestry the position of Bathsheba Herring, about whom there has been much controversy and doubt.

Herring Chrisman's great-grandfather, William Herring, and Abraham Lincoln's grandmother, Bathsheba Herring, were brother and sister.

Herring Chrisman was born September 16, 1823, in Rockingham County, Virginia, where his father was a large planter and slave owner, and where many of Lincoln's forbears lived. The youthful Herring had a Negro boy of his own age as his personal slave as long as he remained at home. He was educated at Washington and Lee University, and became Commonwealth Attorney for Rockingham at the age of twenty-one years.

During the menacing days of secession he became a member of the Chicago Bar, and worked to keep the Union together without force of arms. The rebellion was to him a war between brothers as his two younger brothers entered the Confederate army. During the time that he was in Chicago the city was enjoying a boom and he dealt to a considerable degree in real estate. In these transactions he was financed by his old friends in Virginia, and for them and himself he made some nice profits. He next moved to Knox County, Illinois, where he took up a homestead and bought one thousand acres of adjoining land. Here he fattened a thousand head of cattle on dollar corn to help feed the Union army, while at the same time his brother William was in the commissary department of the Confederate army buying large

droves of cattle to feed the Southern army. As an active business man during those days he lived on his farm part of the time and practiced law in Galesburg and Monmouth, the county seats of Knox and Warren Counties.

From Illinois he followed his oldest son to Pottawattamie County, Iowa, where the family purchased 1,040 acres of prairie land. From there he rode on horseback to Monona County, Iowa, where, in a comparatively short time, he acquired, at an average cost of $5.60 per acre, 7,000 acres of untouched land near Mapleton, on which the native blue-stem swayed wave-like before the wind and the scrub oak grew unmolested. Still financed by stalwart partners who had confidence in his ability and judgment, he proceeded to break, fence, and improve these lands and in the meantime moved his family to Mapleton, from Abingdon, Illinois.

His remaining years were spent at Mapleton, where he divided his activities between his land, cattle, and law business. As a resident of Monona County he was elected County Attorney by a landslide of votes, and also was honored by being elected many times president of the Monona County Bar Association. His death occurred in Mapleton at the ripe old age of 87, on August 14, 1911.

Since Herring Chrisman personally knew Lincoln, the practicing attorney, in Illinois, and then lived on through the years in which Lincoln's name became immortal, he naturally was well fitted to express the thought of the times in regard to Lincoln.

It is hoped that, with the ever growing reverence for Abraham Lincoln and the increasing demand for information concerning his life and family, this contribution may add its bit to the already brilliant luster of his undying name.

Mapleton, Iowa. WILLIAM HERRING CHRISMAN.

BY THE WAY OF INTRODUCTION

Much has been written in regard to President Lincoln's immediate forbears, those of his own family name and of his mother's, but it has remained for Mr. Chrisman to unequivocally identify, and to reveal to us the most complete glimpse so far vouchsafed of the great emancipator's grandmother, Bathsheba Herring. Through her marriage to Captain Abraham Lincoln, their son Thomas, the President's father, inherited maternal strains of Colonial ancestry among the most prominent in Old Augusta, later Rockingham County, Virginia.

Herring Chrisman, as his memoirs herein reveal, knew the late President personally as his friend and kinsman while both were residents of Illinois. That Mr. Lincoln not only appreciated the fact of their friendship but readily acknowledged their kinship is of first importance to the genealogist. These pages, it is believed, are the first to show that Mr. Lincoln, himself, was aware of his Herring descent.

It is refreshing to find one of Mr. Chrisman's talents so intimately acquainted with Mr. Lincoln's ancestral background, portraying it in its natural colors, as he saw it, with considerably more light than is ordinarily used in this detail of the President's picture. It has long been suspected that too much of the drab has too often been toned in.

To the historian an interesting sidelight is thrown on Mr. Lincoln's days in Illinois "before he was great," and the efforts of the Unionists in the time intervening between his first nomination and inauguration to prevent Virginia's secession, and the consequent threat of the invasion of Washington. More particularly Mr. Chrisman's own efforts in this respect in regard to his and Thomas Lincoln's native county, Rockingham, are of note; and further, when it is reflected that the author's brother, George Chrisman, of Rockingham, was later a Major in the Confederate army.

To better appreciate the Chrisman and Lincoln relationship herein alluded to it may be observed that this was through their common Herring ancestor, Alexander Herron (Heron, Herron, Herrin, Herring), the August County pioneer, of whom more appears in these memoirs. Among the children of Alexander and wife Abigail, the records of Rockingham disclose, were sons Leonard, William, and Bethuel, the three of whom are mentioned by Mr. Chrisman, and the first two of whom were early officers of Rockingham; Leonard as a vestryman, and William as a justice of the county court. William and Bethuel were Revolutionary soldiers, the former as a Captain, and the latter as a private. William married Elizabeth Stephenson, a sister of Major David Stephenson of Rockingham, an officer in the Virginia Continental line. It is from William and wife that Mr. Chrisman was descended.

William Herring, at his death in 1806, left two sons, Alexander and William S., and six daughters. His wife died in 1821 possessed of a vast estate, a

large part of which came into the possession of their son Alexander. This last, one of Rockingham's early county surveyors, married Margaret Reed Smith, the daughter of John Smith, of an old prominent Rockingham line. Of the children of Alexander and wife Margaret, a daughter, Martha Davis Herring (1799-1866), married George Harrison Chrisman (1799-1870), and to this pair were born their eldest child, Herring Chrisman, and their fourth child, George Chrisman, the later Major.

From these circumstances in connection with Mr. Chrisman's disclosure that Bathsheba Herring, the grandmother of the President, was a daughter of Alexander Herring, the pioneer, it is evident that Mr. Chrisman's mother's grandfather, William Herring, was a brother of the President's grandmother, and that the author of these delightful reminiscences was in a position to know of whom he spoke in referring to Mr. Lincoln's Herring ancestry.

On his father's side, it may be added, Mr. Chrisman was the descendant of another early prominent Rockingham family. The immigrant, Jacob Chrisman, so the tombstone of his son George relates, emigrated from Swabia, in Germany, "about 1740." Both George and his wife, Hannah, sleep in the old New Erection churchyard, to the west of Harrisonburg. George Chrisman qualified Captain of the Rockingham militia March 26th, 1781. John Chrisman, Gentleman Jack, as he was known, the son of George and Hannah, married Ann Harrison, the daughter of Captain Reuben Harrison. Among the children of John and Ann Chrisman were Joseph, the eldest, and his brother George Harrison above. Joseph

married as his first wife, Elizabeth Lincoln, the daughter of Jacob, a brother of Captain Abraham Lincoln, the President's grandfather.

Herring Chrisman, after serving as commonwealths attorney of Rockingham from 1847 to 1852, migrated to Illinois in 1858. He died August 14, 1911.

Some further observations regarding the subject matter following, based on court record and incidental data assembled by the undersigned in the course of various researches in connection with other investigations, are appended herewith in the form of brief footnotes.

J. Houston Harrison.

Decatur, Georgia, February 17, 1930.

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TRADITION

Away back, so far that the "memory of man runneth not to the contrary," three brothers hunted the wild boar in England, the crack sport of all gentlemen in those merrie old England days. One of these Norman brothers was killed, but the two remaining brothers killed the boar, far more ferocious, as well as more wary, in those days than the lion of the jungle has ever been since.

So great was the feat of taking one off that to commemorate this notable struggle with the beast long after, when the deed rested only in legend and traditionary lore, a Coat of Arms was granted in 1374 by King Edward the Fourth to "Lord Marquis Benjamin Herring of the Ancient family of the Herrings," marked with a boar head, and three (herring) fish, in allusion to the three Brothers Herring and their gallant deed in the killing of the beast so ferocious, powerful, and alert.

Now this "Ancient family" had its seat in Norfolk County, England, while the centuries passed and has to this day, and early in the last century a very young scion of this very old house became so enthusiastic over the stories that were borne by the sailors to a neighboring port of the rare sport in the Colonies of killing wild beasts and Indians, that, though a minor and an orphan, he ran away from his board-

ing school, where he had been placed by his guardian, and worked his way across to America.

And so Alexander Herring landed on these shores, and on attaining his majority collected his means and bought a farm near New Castle, Delaware,[1] and married a wife. Whether his children were born there or not is no longer known; nor indeed is the maiden name of his wife; but about the year 1750 we find him in Virginia with his three sons, and one daughter, on an enormous tract of land most beautiful — near the head of Cook Creek,[2] and covered with the tall yellow pines and the sturdy white oaks that he loved like his friends, and filled with the wild game he so loved to capture and pursue.

His eldest son, Leonard, was established at his marriage on another large tract he had acquired, about half way betwixt his place and Lincoln's,[3] near the head of Lincoln's, which may have led the two families sometimes to meet, but no intimacy came till long afterwards; and was far from being welcomed when it did at last come about. Mr. Herring's other two sons, William and Bethuel, and his daughter, continued to be the joy of his home until finally he came to pass in his account.

Now like a true Englishman he left never a will,[4] though he must have known well what would be the effect under the old English law then prevalent;

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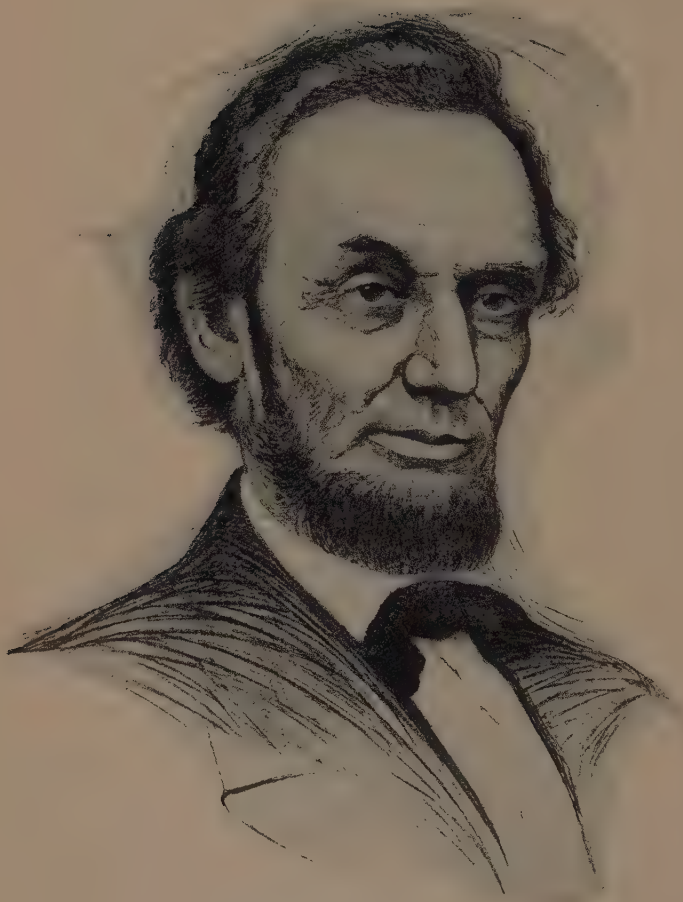
[1]Should be Lewes, Delaware.
[2]See note 26, second paragraph.
[3]See note 27.
[4]See note 26, third paragraph.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

and like a true Englishman of his time-honored days, Leonard, being the eldest son, took it all and would have turned the rest out. But the dawning Revolution soon cast such a pall over his greed and his life that he sold his rights cheaply to his brothers and departed into the wilderness farther west, and neither he nor his name nor his belongings have been heard of by others from that day to this.[5]

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[5]See note 27.

HERRING CHRISMAN

LINCOLN'S FORBEARS—A ROMANCE

God can't make ancestors; He only
makes forbears for His great.

Among all the list of his obscure blood relations in Virginia, and I personally knew as many as thirty-nine of them during my short stay in their neighborhood, the most noteworthy person was no doubt grandmother Lincoln. This lady's life was full of a most strange mystery from first to last. Marked as she was from her earliest youth by an imperturbable gentleness of spirit, and an ineffable winsomeness of manner that won and bound all hearts in her circle to her; the only daughter of a very old house, residing on one of the largest and loveliest estates in the beautiful valley of the Shenandoah, with two brothers devoted almost as lovers to her, and wearing as she did the euphonious and poetical name of Bathsheba, so preserved and embalmed in holy writ, it is hard to understand why she should have persisted in marrying the wild and rollicking border ruffian, Abraham Lincoln, however handsome and stalwart he may have been.

That she should have made a crazy, madcap Boone of him, and incited him to break up his own little home, with his house built by his own hands on a gentle bluff, the dooryard sloping down to the streamlet at its base, and go wandering far beyond the utmost frontier, deep down into the dark and bloody Indian hunting grounds, under pretense of wanting more land for her children, is still more

strange. But that she should have persisted, after her husband was killed and in spite of all her brother's pleadings to come back to him, in standing guard over the lonely grave, enduring untold dangers and hardships, not to say want, on her rich but unbroken forest land, is a mystery in view of her gentle nature no man can solve. Was it a mere piece of woman's fanciful romance, or was it an inspiration of some invisible spirit that held her fast in order that her grandson might grow and attain his stature among these large and uplifting scenes and catch the fresh spirit of that grand and brave and magnanimous and liberty-loving influx of glorious men that were so loyally to uphold his arm to crush the mighty rebellion and preserve the unity of the nation which so fondly from the first was meant for the happy home and refuge of the poor and oppressed of all the lands? No stone or even cypress marks the place where this lady's ashes rest, but she deserves to live embalmed in her great descendant's sacred fame.

I have said that Mrs. Lincoln was of a very old family,[6] and I have little doubt that it was as old in England as the Norman Conquest itself; but it was non-historical then and remains so to this day, and I have to rely on family traditions alone, which, however, are doubtless quite as true and reliable as any of the solemn old stories we read in the most worm-eaten old books. Her story as it comes to me is that her father[7] was an English gentleman, born in Norfolk County, England, not far from the beginning of the eighteenth century. His family had been settled

[6]Herring. See later.
[7]Aleaxnder Herring, the immigrant.

HERRING COAT OF ARMS

for many centuries in that county and still clings to its coat of arms in its old home on that side. This coat of arms, of which a copy has been imported as a memento to this side, purports on the face of it to have been granted to a certain Lord Vi Compte of the family name, a title of no great dignity and long since lapsed, and recites that he was of that "ancient family" and bearing date of 1374. One of the emblems that appear upon this coat of arms is the picture of a boar's head in allusion to a well-remembered contest between two brothers of this house and a famous wild boar in which the savage beast killed one brother and the other brother killed the boar. Now as the wild boar industry was in full feather in Merrie England among the lords and ladies of William's court and as the name of these gentlemen has a very French twang to anyone's ear accustomed to those barbaric sounds, I infer that they were distinctly of that much venerated set whose decendants still claim the right to stand nearest the throne and kiss the queen's hand as often and as fervently as they wish.

I have said that Lincoln's great-grandfather[8] on the female side was an English gentleman. Lawyers know what that means, but the "common people" do not. It means in England a man who does not have to work and would not if he had to. With us it means a man who would not live without work if he could—the number is not so very large. This person was born into that set, which is about the only way to get into it. His parents died while he was a boy, and his aunt became his guardian. As he had some means, she sent him to a boarding school with all due

[8]Great-great-grandfather. See later mention.

dispatch, no doubt. That is an institution designed to punish gentlemen's sons for being born or mayhap to get them out of harm's way at home. Now, this lad was of a peculiar turn. He became disgusted with his idle and precarious kind of life, for the discipline was harsh enough, and incontinently ran away and hired himself to a shipmaster who was about to sail for the colonies, to work his passage over. In what colony he was put ashore or by what manner of work he subsisted till he became of age is not now known. When he came of age it is presumed he realized his means in England, for he married a wife about that time and bought a farm near New Castle,[9] Delaware, and lived on it while his four children, three boys and one girl, were being born.[10]

About the year 1750 he[11] started with his family up the Shenandoah Valley, and when he got to where the forest was dense enough to suit his taste and log cabins far enough apart not to crowd and jostle much, he came to a halt and began to look about for some land to buy. He struck the heads of two streams which rose in two great springs, each large enough to turn a mill as soon as it took a start to run, and each creek fertilized some of the finest lands in the world and these lands won his heart. These streams started from the plain about four miles apart, and near the head of the one on Linville Creek he bought a fair-sized tract and settled Leonard, his eldest son.

About three miles lower down this creek, John Lincoln had not long before[12] acquired the fairest and

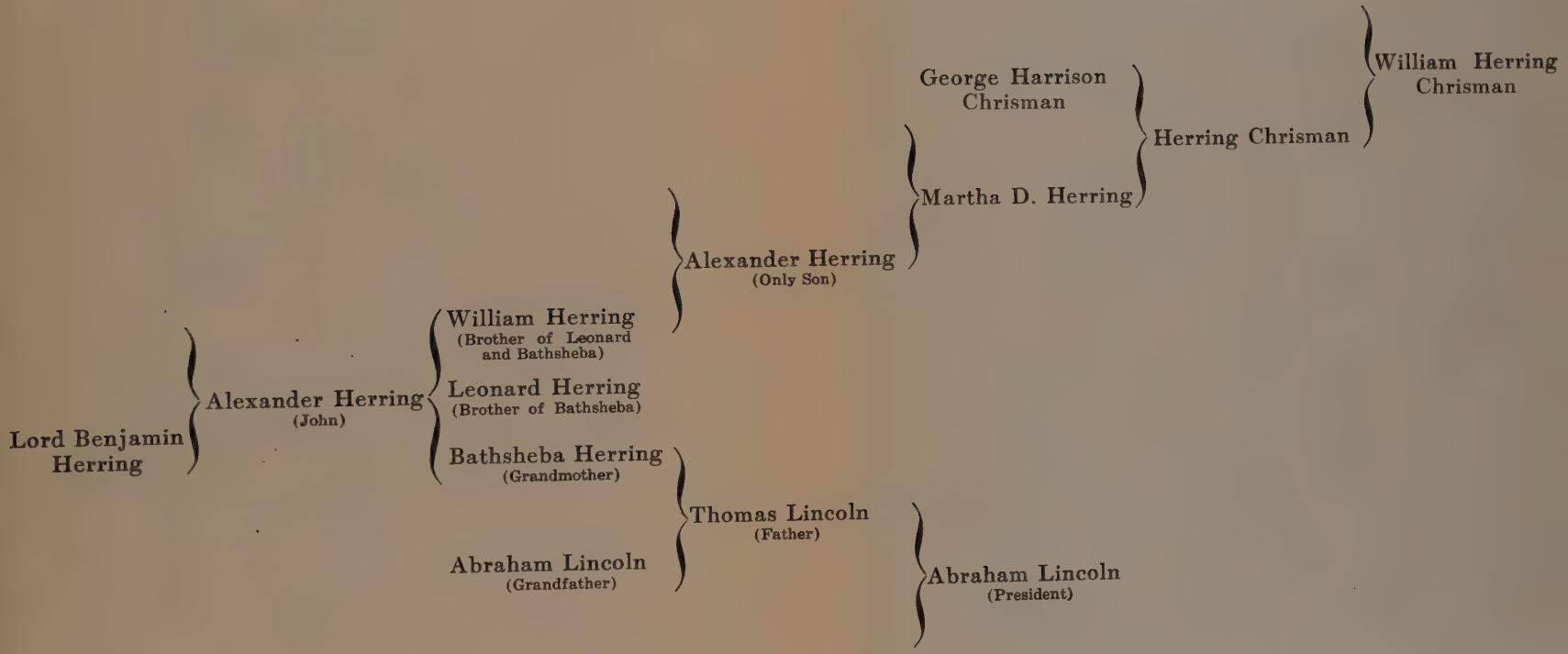
[9]Lewes, Delaware.
[10]Three girls and one boy. See later mention.
[11]Alexander Herring, the pioneer, son of the immigrant.
[12]John Lincoln acquired his land in 1768. Herring was settled by 1746.

largest plat, and thus began a chain to weave itself into solemn fate that led at last to grand results to men and nations then unborn. A few miles farther south on Cook Creek beginning hard by where the village of Dayton stands, he found a tract of 1,100 acres extending down on both sides of the stream for a mile or two, more inviting to the view than his fondest hopes had dared to fashion, and made it home. His two younger sons with Bathsheba were then his family besides dogs and horses, his wife being dead.

Whether he ever owned a slave, as was allowable even in Delaware then, is not now known, though both younger sons as well as John Lincoln's eldest son and heir did indulge themselves later on in that comfortable folly, not to call it by a harder name. Whether this English gentleman ever soiled his hands or not, it is admitted that his sons did in fair and pleasant weather indulge in some light toil, but the father's chief concern was to exterminate the wolves and foxes from his possessions, and though he allowed no guns used against his wide-antlered stags and their innocent does and fawns, they soon scampered off to the neighboring hills where they suffered him to wind his melodious huntsman's horn and listen to the sweet, melodious baying of his hounds while they showed their heels in reasonable safety as long as no one was allowed to shoot. But alas! with the tender Bathsheba for his nurse and cook and no rude alarms of war or harsh discussions about unclaimed political rights to disturb his rest, his life glided so smoothly and swiftly away that no horrid thoughts of death with primogeniture cruelty and wrong ever entered his head. His sons had both married and

been settled on both sides of the creek in fair rifle shot reach of each other with only a stretch of variegated meadow between, nor was his domicile scarce farther away, the loveliest spot on the estate and doubtless meant for his daughter when he was passed to the great beyond. But man proposes and God disposes. When he was dead without a will, it was found that everything had descended to the eldest son,[13] who promptly began to assume his rights. The dawn of a better day for younger children had, however, begun to appear in the east; the rights of man were being quite too warmly asserted by his neighbors, and he prudently sold his rights to his brothers at a price they thought best to give, left for parts unknown, and has never been heard from since. Woman's rights being unborn, and not even imagined at that time, and the daughter not owning and having steadily refused to own or control a man, her father being alive, it did not seem possible for her to acquire property by purchase and she was left wholly unprovided for in the deal and would have been forlorn enough if her two brothers and their two wives had not all loved her to distraction and had not taken her in their arms and each contended with the other in amicable strife who should have her and give to her oftenest and most of their affection and their substance. Nor was there any great sacrifice in this, for she was helpful, active, and strong and was worth her weight in gold, as Abraham Lincoln of Linville Creek was not long in finding out. His father had also died without a will[14] and left him under the power of an

[13]It appears that the will was broken. See later mention.
[14]John Lincoln's will was dated 1786.


Lord Benjamin Herring
Alexander Herring (John)
William Herring (Brother of Leonard and Bathsheba)
Leonard Herring (Brother of Bathsheba)
Bathsheba Herring (Grandmother)
Abraham Lincoln (Grandfather)
Alexander Herring (Only Son)
Thomas Lincoln (Father)
Martha D. Herring
George Harrison Chrisman
Herring Chrisman
William Herring Chrisman
Abraham Lincoln (President)

elder brother,[15] and not more generous heir. But he was of the sort that make bold to help themselves and had already hewed out a sufficient home for himself.

Now these Lincolns were of a different strain from the Cook Creek folk and didn't give a fig whether their blood was blue or red. They had no traditions and didn't want any. They would much rather fight in the wars as they always did, from the Revolution to the Rebellion, and always on the rebel side, than dig and grope for an ancestral line. So when, drawn toward her at first by the similitude of the wrongs they had suffered alike from the law, he presented himself to Bathsheba as a suitor, he was the very heroic sort to fit her own slumbering heroism of nature and they promptly made it home on his little farm which I have in another number described. For whether he was wrought out of porcelain or common clay she recognized in him some diamond qualities of high honor and stern integrity and dauntless physical nerve such as she desired to bequeath and perpetuate in her line and which by God's grace she did.

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[15]Abraham was the oldest son. Reference here is to Jacob.

LINCOLN'S PARENTS—A ROMANCE

It will be forty years next summer that I called at the house where Bathsheba Lincoln was married in the old Colonial days. The scenes around it had been familiar to me in my childhood insomuch that I could even recall the face and form of the brother that had loved her so well, all the more, perhaps, for her lonely, sad life in her wild western home. He was a gentle and kindly old man, much loved and cherished by his family, including his slaves. He had educated two of his slaves and one was a professor in Liberia College and the other soon followed him. At the time of this call I made at his place, he had been long dead, but some of his children were still there. The place was much as he had left it, much as it was when I was a child, for the grass was as green in the meadow close by, and the trees as sturdy and strong in the orchard and the ground under their thick shade as well covered with ripe yellow fruit. The house had grown grayer outside, yellow pine though it was, but within, though it had never smelled paint, it was scoured as spick and span as a new-born pin. The thin, quavering voices of the inmates told of old age, and at the mention of Lincoln their memories flashed back to a still older time and one and another would recall his father and mother who had first met in that old home. One would recite that their Aunt Lincoln's son Thomas was back from Kentucky when first grown. Another

remembered that Nancy Hanks lived just over the hill as she always had and was often at the house, and all agreed what a joyous, jolly good fellow Thomas was, so handy and helpful in door and out, and what a dear, good girl but more sober and sedate, Nancy Hanks was, and how helpful in sickness and sorrow she was, and beyond her age. After their marriage in Kentucky, to which Thomas had returned and Nancy had emigrated some while later, with her family, they had both dropped out of sight, and their son had never been heard of till his name had appeared just then like a handwriting on the wall and made them tremble for their slaves.

The old yellow pine Colonial house still marks the spot where it then stood, almost the only house in the countryside that Sheridan didn't burn one morning when his Irish was up.

When Lincoln's parents were first married they had but little to start with, we may very well guess, for neither had a father to help them, and Thomas, like his long dead sire, was a younger son, and the land which his mother had dared so much to "possess and hold" for her children had passed by the same Colonial law to Mordecai, the eldest son. But no Lincoln had ever tried to rear a family without a farm, and Thomas had soon bought one. They say it was very poor land, and that is no doubt true, for slavery had encircled and possessed itself of all that was rich enough to maintain a slave. But poor as it was, he supported his family on it till his son was born, when he began to feel impelled to seek a more

congenial soil for him to farm. The straw that broke the camel's back, however, was slavery, beyond a doubt, for long years afterward he told his son that he had left Kentucky on account of slavery and bad titles, which latter was a great drawback to that state for many long years. When he reached Indiana and had a good title to a fat piece of land, he was once more on the glorious young border where nearly all the land as well as pasture and game and many other good things was free, and where men of all races always had been and always were to be born "free and equal," and he would have lived the happiest life in the world—as indeed he did for some years—but for two things of which I shall hereafter have to speak.

I am persuaded, from all I know of all these people, and all I know and have myself enjoyed of the delicious border life, that Thomas Lincoln's first years in Indiana were one long drawn honeymoon, if not more than equivalent to many bridal trips that have been made, in the lap of an artificial luxury, around the world. True, when he drove down his first stakes in the primeval forest, and the trees were very large, there was too much work to do before perfect rest could be properly begun, and though like his son after he grew up he was quick and strong beyond other men and had rare sleight with his axe and could work like a blizzard when he had to, still like his son he didn't crave work merely for its own sake and having been brought up in the woods he knew very well how to make a little work go a long way and soon had his family settled to his

heart's content. Indeed he was a reasonable man and didn't need a great deal. Like his son he cared nothing for money, and having escaped the snares of literary training in early life, he was as free from any longings after fame as he was for any irksome wealth. A log cabin didn't take long to build and with a patch large enough to raise bread, with the best of range for his cows and a few sheep, with mast for his pigs, and with his unerring rifle to bring down a fat stag, a tender fawn, a long-bearded gobbler, or a plump cock pheasant, of which the woods were full, if he was not a gentleman of elegant leisure, I should like to know who was. Then, too, he was handy with tools, like his son, and found a keen delight on a stormy day in fashioning a cradle for the baby, and if a sombre mood ever overtook him, he could easily work it off by nailing up a good tight coffin for a dear old friend.

In one respect, at least, he quite surpassed his son and quite equalled him in another. He could enjoy a camp meeting to a finish, and could follow the preacher with quite as eloquent and effectual a prayer as the best, and on a cold winter's night, with a backlog ablaze on the hearth, he could tell as many funny stories and keep his backwoods neighbors in as loud a roar as his son ever did a court house crowd.

But all earthly joys must have checks. His beloved Nancy would nurse the sick, of which there were not a few near them, and pray for their souls more than her strength would bear, and she sickened and died.[16] He mourned her loss, and often,

[16] 1818.

no doubt, wept with his sorrowful little boy over his "angel mother's" grave. But grief, to make life tolerable, must have an end; and in his lonely hours his thoughts began to recall certain passages he had had in the long, long ago in Kentucky, and he began to feel drawn to cross the Ohio to see the dear old girls once more, and lo behold, he found dear Sally Bush a widow, and not unamenable to such arguments as he could adduce to her to try once more the more solid joys and comforts of the connubial life, and took her with him with no mean dispatch. As she soon proved herself not only another good wife to himself but another good mother to his son, he was once more the happiest of men.

But his son had at length attained a great stature, and his mind and heart both began to swell with the destiny that was in him. When the son announced that he must go to Illinois, the heart of his father was like to break at the thought of parting from him; but after solemn consultation with Sally—she could not stand it either—the son was told to hitch up the oxen to the wagon and load in the traps—they didn't wait to sell—and out across the Wabash and down the Sangamon, away they drove, rejoicing in the new border life before them. Their son pitched their tent and made it home for them, where they could, as long as either of them lived, see him climbing higher and higher up the ladder of fame, and yet both were spared the pain of witnessing the final cruel taking off, which has lent a royal purple coloring to his immortal and colossal fame as nothing else could.

BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Lincoln, the father of the ex-president, was born in Rockingham County, Virginia. The first guns of the Revolution might have heralded his advent.[17] His birthplace was a small farm on Linville Creek.

The house is still there in good preservation. It was built of yellow pine and stood on a gentle eminence hard by a water mill, the first that was built on the stream that still turns it. The two stood near enough to each other for the song of the water-wheel to perform the office of a lullaby.

Nor was Thomas in the least sense like his son in being "absolutely without ancestors."[18] It is only the historical giants that are "born without ancestors." He had as many as most men of his age, and of a fair average quality for the period he lived in.

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[17]See note 32. Waldo Lincoln, in his "Ancestry of the Lincoln Family," records Thomas Lincoln's birth as of January 6, 1778. Lea and Hutchinson, in their "Ancestry of Abraham Lincoln," record it January 20, 1780. In his brief autobiography the President after mentioning his grandfather's removal to Kentucky "about 1781 or 2," and his subsequent death "a year or two later," states, "My father at the death of his father was but six years of age. . ."

[18]The founder of the family in America was Samuel Lincoln, who emigrated from Norfolk County, England, and settled in Massachusetts. He had a son Mordecai (first), of Hingham, who in turn had sons Mordecai (second), born 1686, Abraham, born 1689, and others. Mordecai (second) and Abraham migrated to Monmouth County, New Jersey, where John Lincoln, the eldest son of Mordecai (second) was born. Following John's birth his father removed with his family to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, from whence John moved to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

John Lincoln, his grandfather, had settled some thirty years earlier,[19] when the county was a wilderness, on the same stream a short way above this. He had taken up the finest tract on that very fertilizing stream, and of rather ample dimensions. He died without a will,[20] and as the law then stood his eldest son, Jacob, heired his acres and consented to receive them. But he (Jacob) went to the wars as Captain of a company that served under Washington, and acquired the first negroes ever held in the family, if not in his neighborhood; all of which went a long way to excuse him. His younger brother, Abraham, who was the ancestor of Thomas, had to content himself with a much smaller holding acquired by his own efforts.

These Lincolns were somewhat a peculiar people. They owned the very best farms and tilled them in the very best manner. They abhorred debt, and made it a point to owe no man anything. They lived in good houses and ate of the fat of the land, to which their neighbors were cordially welcomed. They attended the Common Schools with rare punctuality, but beyond that they despised books as cordially as any noble lord in the early years of Merrie England. The women were good wives, and the men were good husbands, and their sons were Abraham, Jacob, and David,[21] but never any Isaacs. The men went to wars

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[19]John Lincoln's migration from Pennsylvania occurred about 1768. See note 29.

[20]Jacob Lincoln (1751-1822), was the third son of John, the Virginia pioneer.

[21]Jacob Lincoln, son of John, the pioneer, had sons David, John, Jacob, and Abraham. Captain Al. Lincoln, a descendant of one of these sons, was a recruiting officer of the Confederate army in Rockingham during the War between the States.

with alacrity and fought well when they got there. They were careful to have a Captain Lincoln with them, and usually he was called Abraham. One Captain of that name was promoted several grades higher in the peace establishment, but never had the pleasure to order any killing.

Two of the Lincoln slaves fell to my Aunt Betsey, the wife of my uncle. The good lady died when her little Jack was an infant and she left her woman to take care of him. The kind-hearted creature clung to him like her very own as long as her life lasted, and expired gazing lovingly into his eyes that were streaming with manly tears.

Of those Captain Lincolns, one served with Jeff Davis against the Black Hawks.[22] Another served at Bull Run with Jeff Davis, against his cousin in the White House, and in the Stonewall Brigade.

The mother of Thomas Lincoln was the ineffable, the incomparable, and the most winsome of women, "My Aunt Bathsheba," as the old ladies of her kindred with great reverence were accustomed to speak of her in the after years. They boasted that in addition to the grasp of a virile intellect and high courage, a quality so needful to the women that dwelt as she did, her whole life in the wild border, much of it a widow, she possessed all the feminine accomplishments her sex had ever learned aforetime in sacred or profane history in the Colonies or the West. She could card the wool, spin the yarn, weave the cloth, and sew up the garments like the proudest queens of old, and they even claimed that while her brothers were fighting for independence she taught herself to

[22]Probably a reference to the President's services in his younger days.

reap, to sow, to plant, and to mow; all of which proved of high value to her country long after, as we may sometime show.

I have often amused myself and others by tracing symptoms of heredity among men and other animals. If I should apply it to the case of Mr. Lincoln I should be apt to trace his eloquence, his intellectuality, his love of a few books, his political ambitions, and his winsomeness, to his grandmother; his almost fierce determination and ability to keep out of debt, his reckless disregard of danger, and his taste for military affairs, to the Lincolns; his love of funny stories and small desire for property to his father; his ineffable goodness of heart, and broad charity for all men, his thoughtful care for everything that was sick or in trouble, and his wonderful tenderness for his poor wounded soldier boys in the hospitals, to his "Angel Mother," as he so loved to call her.

His grandfather plied his merry axe as carelessly in the forest infested with Indians and lost his life as needlessly as Mr. Lincoln walked unguarded in a city infested with Southern sympathizers. He would have been purely safe in the streets of Richmond, for its people were not assassins and would as soon assault Mr. Davis. His grandmother is held in the family traditions of her kindred to have been the "ne plus ultra" of all that was winsome and wonderful, and to have doted on the sublime eloquence of the Bible, which formed the major part of her slim library, and her chiefest consolation in her forest home, so far away in Kentucky.

His father cared for only eighty acres, enough to supply his simple wants when the rich wilds around him in both Indiana and Illinois could be had almost

for the asking, and would rather construct a rude table for a young couple, or a coffin for an old friend, or tell a funny story to a weary traveler than to waste his time in producing that of which all men in reach of him had a surplus.

Mr. Lincoln spent his whole professional life at Springfield in full view of the land office, in which the whole grand state of Illinois was being entered at a dollar and a quarter, and never acquired a single acre. Indeed, the only acres he ever owned were those he served for in the Black Hawk war; and that was called the poorest piece in Crawford County, Iowa.

It was to his mother he owed the very marrow of his goodness that so compelled all men to love him. She visited the sick and comforted the dying in her pestilential region, as he sought the soldiers' hospital or the lonely pillow of his humblest friend; and literally wore her life away in these pious godly ministrations among her neighbors, until she fell a victim and left her infant son alone to dream of his "Angel Mother"—and his many-sided nature and the grand total and wonderful equipoise of his character may have been rendered possible by these divers strains of blood, so happily commonplace.

His grandmother's father brought her (his grandmother) up on a very large estate not very far from Lincoln's that still owns his name; but like the first Lincoln he died without a will and left his daughter without a cent, so that when she and Abraham Lincoln married, both being younger children of English fathers, they started from the stump. In 1780, as everybody knows, she followed her husband to Kentucky, infested though she knew it was with savage

men and savage beasts, and lost him the first year.

There begins the history of Thomas Lincoln, then perhaps eight years old.[23] At his first introduction to history he was watching over his father's bleeding corpse while his next oldest brother was killing the Indians that inflicted the wound. Half orphaned at that tender age in a forest almost untenanted for hundreds of miles round; with no schools, no churches, not even so much as a mill, it seems almost a fairy tale how he ever grew up to be a civilized man. But though he must needs have been as unlettered as Tecumseh, or any proud lord of the realm in the old feudal times that ever refused to sign a document except with a cross, there were means of education on the border in those halcyon days that quickened the faculties and expanded the mind quite equal to books; as witness Washington and Braddock in their joint campaign, or the inroads of Alaric, who had never seen a letter.

This frightful superiority over the highly polished generals of Rome, or the wide difference in the field betwixt Grant, who cared the least of all generals since Napoleon for books, and the elegant and polished McClellan, who slept, dreamed, and fought with the volume in his hand, is acknowledged. How this young woodsman improved his opportunities we can only judge by the impression he made when he emerged into "the best society" in Virginia.

About the time of his majority, he visited his mother's only surviving brother,[24] who was a gentleman of the oldest school, of the quietest, easiest, and most genial manners, and the bluest blood. His

[23]See note 17.
[24]See note 28.

uncle received him "con amore" into his family of young men and maidens, and he soon made himself the life and pet of the house; so well did his gentle ways and joyous spirit and fresh views of life accord with their own, and so amusing to them all were his well-told funny stories of the border life.

Unlike your bookworms with their ponderous load of twice-told tales—the good Lord deliver us from your man of books—he never was a bore. Indeed there is said to be a freshness and sparkle and rapid transit about the man that God and Nature has made which can never be reached by the man whose faculties have been benumbed and made torpid by the flat flavor of books. But as we have never seen one of the book scholars out West it is a mere matter of fancy with us. Yet as we have seen by how far the armies that were made up in the West and South where so few people could read and write outfought any armies that were ever set in a field, we are apt to conclude that in some ways the man that fights with the sword must be half-way equal to the man that fights with the pen. Then too the father of his country was a very meager scholar; but the father of secession was by far the most accomplished man of his time.

It was while on this visit to his Uncle in Virginia, and probably at his house, for she lived very near, that Thomas Lincoln first met and fancied "the Angel Mother" of the best beloved president of the United States.[25] And though she was very poor and very

[25]Both of the President's parents, as stated in his brief autobiography, were born in Virginia. A Hanks family resided in the Brocks Gap region of Rockingham County, to the west of Linville Creek.

humble if you choose, yet such was her character, such was the purity and tenderness and loyalty of her nature, that these very proud people, his relatives, were well pleased to hear of their marriage when they had met again in Kentucky some years later. And right here is where, according to the very veritable history which hastened to appear as soon as the ex-president was no more, a line of troubles instead of joys began.

The youthful couple were beyond a doubt both poor enough to be happy, for Thomas was a younger son, and under the law that had then prevailed took nothing, not even his blessing, from his father, and in the good old English way his eldest brother took the land that cost his father's life. But land was the plentiest thing in life in those halcyon days, and neither doubtless thought much harm of this. They simply went and bought a piece, and got on it as quick as a flash, and were doubtless merry and jolly enough.

But right here a crank steps in with his solemn lugubrious frown and dashes their very honeymoon with sorrow. By some strange chance he had got to be nominally their son's full partner, while in fact the merest drudge in Lincoln's law office, and modestly gives us to understand, in his prompt vivacious ways, the various arts and measures by which he not only hid his partner's oft repeated insanity from all the rest of the world, but finally managed him into the highest office in human gift, and asks nothing now for himself but to kick at the dead lion in the persons of both his parents, not omitting an occasional slap at his wife.

Now this crank, who was supposed to speak ex cathedra, was afterwards copied by others who were writing in haste for what there was in it, and he took the couple to the famous farm at Nolin Creek where their son was said to have been born, and growled and snarled at both to the end of their lives and gave as miserable a picture as even a poet could paint.

This like all such things is doubtless far from being the truth. They (Thomas and his wife) have often been described by those who knew them well as having been highly esteemed and as happy as usually falls to the lot of that most happy class of people.

The first complaint is that Thomas lost the Nolin Creek farm by the most inexcusable of faults; but the result of transferring his son from a slave state into the free air of the Northwest has proved his foresightedness, so we may readily excuse any small fault in his management. He was accustomed to tell his son that he left Kentucky on account of bad titles and slavery. He moved to a free state when the titles were fresh from the government and good. He bought what land he wished, lived as he wished, and brought up his son to be President of the United States. Have any of his critics done better for their country; and why wasn't he both happy and good? He was brought up in the woods as his forefathers for several generations had been. A woodland state in its acres might very well please him immensely. The grand old familiar forest was there, the old gnarled oaks, the symmetrical walnuts, the tall poplars, the thick

leafed birch with their interlaced saplings all were there. The fecund soil, the spontaneous fruits, the abounding game, and the genial skies were there, as at his childhood home, and above all his son was there to gladden him with his smile.

True the flow of this innocent joy met with one sad check, for a single serpent, the milk-sick, entered this Eden at length and set its fatal fangs on his wife; that wife who was the tenderest assuager of grief, and the sweetest encourager of hope, when her neighbors were prostrate on a fevered couch, that ever sacrificed her life to Christian charity; but he soon found a widow, his sorrows to beguile; one whom he had long known and admired in his youth, and who proved she was as happily chosen as the first wife—when she so soon taught his son to love her as his own mother, and love her so dearly to the end of his life.

Of his subsequent life in Indiana we know very little. The stream must have had flowers not a few on its border, and run limpid within its banks, for there were no disappointed aspirations for fame; no worm of avarice ever gnawed at his heart, no grinding toil bore down to crush each sweet emotion as it knocked at his heart for admission. The Indians had fled forever at the last dying shriek of Tecumseh; immigration and work in the new states were reluctant and slow; the skies were genial and kind; the thick forest was sheltering alike for each season as it came and went; each day had a charm of its own, whether in sunshine or storm; choice fruits

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grew spontaneously and hung neglected in his reach; a few kernels for bread, a few grains for feed; wild game fat and lazy unused to the rifle and disdaining to fly; and fishes darkening the streamlets and courting to be caught — these were the happy concomitants of his ordinary life. Nor yet need his hours hang heavy on his hands. In summer he could tickle the fecund soil a few hours with his hoe, or his plow, in the cool of the morning, and doze at the noontide *sub tigmine fagi*. In winter he could stalk the deer and track turkeys in the snow, and bring down a pheasant, fit viands for a king; or if the clouds were aleek, and the wind blew a gale, he could hew out a coffin for a passed away friend, for he was handy with tools; or he could construct a rude table for a new-married couple; or saw a hollow half section of some tree for a cradle, mayhap. But the long winter evenings were said to be his jolliest times. Seated before the wide-jawed cavernous chimney, with the great logs piled up high and ablaze, a neighborly circle around, his big long son so ready to laugh, and now and then pitch in a joke of his own fresh coinage, he would draw out the bottomless sack which his memory and invention kept filled with funny stories, and so well were they told that the welkin would ring though he only smiled.

But all things must end, however sweet. His son had grown up and the song of the prairie began to resound in his ears, this mysterious awesome destiny to impel him to the West. Life was of small value

to the father, now far advanced, without the near touch of the son; and so together they went out from among their fond friends and their home, and turned their faces toward the land where the sun goes to bed among flowers, closing their petals for sleep, as he falls on a calm night into the boundless meadow —as he goes into a slow-moving wave of the sea to the Mariner's crew.

A new and unusual happiness awaited them both when they reached Illinois. To the eyes of the farmer a scene of enchantment was opened. Flowers and meadows, fat lowing herds, and unbounded expanse took the place of narrow perspectives, charred clearings, unceasing obstructions, and the fast fleeing game. The moving and turning of the rich mellow soil was to him in itself a delight, and the growth of his plants was so marvelous and grand that the dial of his life seemed to turn back, and a new strength to be added to his bones. On the other hand new views of life seemed to open to his son, as he gazed upon the boundless and uplifting expanse. The father began to admire and hope new things he dared not even to trust for the son. The son began to reach out after things he had not dreamed of before, and each step forward he gained gave to his father a more feverish and delightful, though half hidden, hope. Step after step was gained, and as firmly held, up the steep ragged incline that leads on to fortune, till the father ceased to hold his breath and fear for his fall. Then at last he was ready to say with the prophet, "Now Lord let thy servant depart in peace."

Who shall say his life was not well spent? He might have been rich if he had ever once harbored the wish. His whole life was spent on the border from the cradle to the grave. He needed only to reach forth and grasp, as other far inferior men did, and grow fat on "the sweat of other men's brow." It is the unearned increment that makes men rich. He coveted only what he needed, and earned; and in this the father and the son were alike. Let the world recognize the noble resemblance, and be glad. If the father had been rich, the son would never have been great. Riches have a poisonous aroma that steals, and cankers, and saps the strength of the young.

ROCKINGHAM HOMESTEAD

In 1860 an old house was still standing on the bank of one of those bright little streams that go to make up the sparkling flow of the Shenandoah River. It was built of yellow pine lumber that had grown on the site where the house was standing, and built before the first gun was fired in our first rebellion. It had never been painted inside or out but was kept swept and garnished as bright and as sweet as any queen's palace. It stood in the midst of a plain that resembled for all the world a gently rolling prairie, and the stream that ran past it flowed through a meadow the whole length of the estate of its hitherto fortunate proprietor. The green herbage that grew on its brinks dipped its blades into the water as if to quench their thirst as the wild doe and her fawns had been wont to in the years long gone before. Two very old ladies were at home there and while to the owner of the property, a slave holder, the then pending candidacy of his kinsman for the presidency seemed like a handwriting on the wall and closed his lips and knitted his brow as often as referred to, the old ladies were quite willing to fish well their memories for the history of the family and its connection with Mr. Lincoln.

ALEXANDER HERRING

They recalled that the first founder of their family in Virginia was an English gentleman named Alexander Herring who emigrated in his nonage to Delaware[26] and afterwards, about 1750, brought his three sons and one daughter with his parents into the then newest Eldorado, and bought from the royal government in the virgin forest the grand tract they were living on of 1100 acres and resided on it the remainder of his life, but that when he died under

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[26]Alexander Herring, the Delaware settler, located in Sussex County, near Rehobeth Bay, where he bought a tract of land of Edward Bran, in 1719. His will dated in 1735 devised this land to his only son Alexander. Bequests were also made to his daughters Eady Herring, Esther Wood, and Sarah Prettyman.

In 1742 the son sold the land so devised to Peter Dale, and about the same time removed to the Linville Creek region of present Rockingham County, Virginia. In 1746 he is found named as a road overseer on the records of Augusta, the county out of which Rockingham was later formed. His Linville Creek land was first entered by Samuel Harrison who allowed him to take up a part of his (Harrison's) own survey. In 1751 Harrison executed a deed to Herring for 265 acres, the patent having been issued in Harrison's name. Herring finally settled on Cook Creek a short distance farther south. His first Cook Creek land was purchased of Samuel Wilkins in 1749. To this at various times he added other tracts, most of them being purchased of Wilkins, and in 1769 when the whole was surveyed it embraced 750 acres. In the meantime through land patents beginning with 1755 he was granted 586 acres, 400 of which comprised two further tracts of original Harrison land on Linville Creek.

The last will and testament of Alexander Herring was proven in Rockingham Court, 22nd June, 1778. His executors Abigail, Alexander, and Jesse Herring entered into bond. On the same day Leonard Herring executed a deed to his brothers Alexander, William, Bethuel, and Jesse Herring. Several circumstances go to show that the will of the pioneer was broken. Leonard, the eldest son, was not named as an executor. Alexander, the younger, died shortly after his father. The administration of his estate was granted to "Leonard Herren his eldest Bro." 22nd November, 1779.

English rule the estate fell to his oldest son[27] whom they called "my Uncle Leonard." He graciously accepted the inheritance, but the law had already become so odious that he found himself cut off from all society and made the best amends he could by selling to his two brothers, William and Bethuel, not exactly for a mess of pottage, but on very easy terms, and severing himself from this kindred into some unknown land. Yet at that time the rights of women had never even been imagined; and the sister whom they all loved and honored was overlooked in the arrangement, and only made at home at both houses and generously supplied in good English fashion, and welcomed with the greatest warmth and treated with highest consideration.

[27]Leonard Herring, son of the pioneer, married in 1761, Abigail Harrison, daughter of Thomas Harrison, founder of Harrisonburg. He settled on the Linville Creek land of his father. In 1800 he and wife Abigail conveyed a part of this land, part of the tract purchased by his father in 1751, as above, to Jacob Peary. He was yet a resident of Rockingham in 1805 in which year his son Leonard married Anne Ervin, the fathers of both bride and groom giving their consent. By this time he was getting along in years and if his removal from the country ever occurred it was most likely in company with a son to the West following his wife's death. He was an officer of the county in 1788, and raised a number of children who married into prominent Rockingham families.

BATHSHEBA

But the old ladies[28] never tired of the praises of "my Aunt Bathsheba," as they spoke of her with proud and serious reverence. They would describe her over and over as the *ne plus ultra* of the grand old Colonial womanhood, who had just inspired the subjugation of the forests, and the conquest of the Indians, and then the final overthrow of England in America; and lovingly repeated the minutest details of her history. They described her as the most winsome of women, high-toned and intellectual, and heroic beyond her sex, when the infant colonies were so replete with brave women. And then they would tell how, when young Abraham Lincoln came awooing "my Aunt Bathsheba," her brothers could not bear it; nor was it because he was a younger son, like themselves, and compelled to buy his home, which he had done when his elder took the inheritance and kept it.[29]

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[28]The two "very old ladies" were evidently two daughters of the "gentle and kindly old man" previously mentioned by the author. Of all the sons of Alexander Herring, the pioneer, only Bethuel, by the time of the author's childhood, could possibly have been seen by him in person. Alexander died in 1779, William in 1806, and Jesse in 1781. Among Bethuel's daughters were Edith, Betsy, and Jane, who are thought to have likely died unmarried, and two of whom may have been living in 1860. Alexander Herring, the son of William, had two unmarried daughters, but neither over sixty years of age in 1860.

[29]John Lincoln (1711-1789), the Virginia pioneer, in 1768 acquired by purchase 600 acres of land on Linville Creek. Of this he conveyed 200 acres to his eldest son Abraham, the later Captain, by deed of gift in 1773. His will dated in 1786, and proven in 1789, names his wife Rebecca, sons Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, John, and

Now it was a brave inheritance this "heir" got, for the Lincoln property was large and rich and handsome; but he mollified the public wrath by going as Captain under General Washington and by bringing home some slaves.

Two of these, husband and wife, I remember perfectly, but they may have been only children of the first "catch." They fell to my Aunt Betsey Lincoln[30], and one of them, the woman, was a faithful mammy to my half-orphan cousin, loved him always as her very own, and kept his house with fondest care after he "went to himself," until he received her latest breath and closed her eyes in death, his own astream with tears.

The old ladies said these loving brothers pretended to object to Lincoln because his manners were too loud to mate with those of their peerless sister and he would sometimes fight with fists; but the real reason was, however well they could conceal it, that her blood was so very blue and his so very red. But men were scarce, and women must wed, and Lincoln was handsome and brave; and she married herself to

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Thomas, and daughters Hannah, Lydia, Sarah, and Rebecca, and a granddaughter Hannah Bryan. By his will 200 acres of the original 600 were devised to his son Thomas, and an additional tract to his widow, Rebecca, during her lifetime, and then to his daughter Rebecca Rymel. Thomas by deed 1791, conveyed his tract to his brother Jacob, and about the same year removed to Kentucky whence his brother Abraham had earlier settled. Isaac removed to Tennessee, and John to Ohio. Jacob remained on the home plantation. He was commissioned Lieutenant of the Rockingham militia, qualifying in 1781, and is said to have participated in the siege of Yorktown.

[30]Betsy Lincoln, evidently Elizabeth, the first wife of Joseph Chrisman, the writer's uncle.

him,[31] by the blessing of God, and went to live on his neat little farm, hard by his father's home, and they spent their honeymoon not altogether unconscious of the deep ground-swell that was to rend the colonies from the motherland.

In quick succession three little boys[32] were born, with the echo of distant battles for their lullaby, often battles in which the men of West Augusta, their kindred and their neighbors, bore a noble part. The forest line was moving westward while the battles went on; their little farm always so small by comparison with their father's ample holdings, and growing less to them as each child came, their land-living instincts inherent in their blood, and the wild love of the grand and free forest life which had grown with their growth and become a part of each of them long before the war had altogether ceased, had turned their thoughts and hearts toward the setting sun; and in 1780, in spite of tears and prayers of living relatives, they took up that fateful line of march deep down into the Dark and Bloody ground hard by where Louisville is now, but then was not.[33]

Surrounded by the solemn mighty forest they had always loved, unmindful of the Indian war-whoop that on occasion could still be heard from the savage on his rounds, they spent a new and charming honey-

[31]Abraham Lincoln (1744-1786-8), son of "Virginia John," was married in 1770. At the time only the names of the grooms were noted in the marriage records as now preserved.

[32]Mordecai, born about 1771, Josiah, about 1773, and Thomas, 1778 or 1780.

[33]Abraham Lincoln's deed disposing of his Rockingham land was dated in 1780. His wife, Bathsheba, released her dower right in 1781.

the long hard struggle that was destined in its remote moon amid sweet dreams of children settled around them on their own broad and fertile acres in easy sight of their own mellow corn and a happy old age hand in hand together. Reckless of personal danger as was the habit of his race, Lincoln plied his axe while she plied her wheel and all went merrily until within the shortest year they had lived, Lincoln fell wounded to death[34] and his savage slayer lay lifeless by his side at the hands of the boy hero, his mother's first-born.

Then came the long hard solemn test of the grand woman's courage and her breeding and her blood. How dark and dense the forest seemed that so lately had smiled. How appalling the dangers magnified. How her womanly tears flowed as she stood and gazed on her husband's fresh mound. With no mails and no mills, no school and no church, no neighbors and no friends, her brother begging her return to his roof, she yet had the mind to comprehend her duty, though her high destiny was hid, and she had the courage to resolve to "possess and hold" the land she had bought with her husband's blood; and not unlike to that of her illustrious grandson her spirit only rose higher as the clouds hung lower, and like him who was only more persistent when his vanquished armies fled, she persevered, and like him she won the goal in

[34]The administration of Abraham Lincoln's estate was granted in Nelson County, Kentucky, in 1788. His land was in Jefferson. Following his death his widow removed to Washington County, in which she was residing in 1792. She died about 1795, after apparently spending her declining years with her daughter Nancy, who married William Brumfield.

consequences to rebound to the unmeasured glory of the name she wore. Had she faltered in that awesome crisis and returned her children to dwell amid slavery and rear broods in their turn for its defence, the map of America might have been changed bringing unutterable woe.

Besides her illustrious grandson, Mrs. Bathsheba Herring Lincoln had ten nephews and five nieces[35] of the highest order of talents, character, and information, and all of them his contemporaries, and it has seldom happened to any one man in history to have as many blood relatives of the first rank all living while he did. And yet such was the lack of intercommunication in those days between his home in Illinois and their home in Virginia that he never met one of them. Of the females, only one ever had issue, and I was her first-born and the only one of his Virginia kin he ever knew, and the only one, except perhaps my brother in Philadelphia,[36] that did not throw his influence with might and main against him in his contest with the rebellion.

HERRING CHRISMAN.

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[35]Leonard, William, and Bethuel Herring all left fairly large families, but reference here seems to include more particularly the five sons and five daughters of Alexander Herring, son of William. Of these John Smith Herring was a member of the Virginia State Senate; Alexander and Daniel Smith Herring were both West Pointers. The latter died while fighting Osceola under General Taylor among the Everglades in Florida.

[36]Burke Chrisman (1827-1895).

LINCOLN'S CONTEMPORARY KIN

I have said that Lincoln's forbears were a non-historical people. That would be equally true to say of all his kith and kin to the present day. But are we not accustomed too much to minimize private citizens and magnify public men? Does not a country owe more to the great body of intelligent and virtuous "common people" than it does even to the truly great? How few of those whom we call great succeed in leaving their country much in their debt. Washington and Franklin did most to achieve our independence and left no wounds on the body politic. Hamilton and Madison made for us the Constitution and did us no great harm; Webster taught us the real meaning and binding force of the instrument on each man individually and committed no great crime. Only how few were like these. Jefferson expanded our territory and taught us that we must either grow or die. But he was the father of "State Rights," a dogma which bore secession in its womb, and this has proved itself the original and accursed fountain of all our national griefs and woes. Jackson strangled "Nullification," but he first introduced the "spoils system," which together with woeful increase of private wealth so ominously threatens to subvert our very forms of liberty. Clay, by the mere melody of his voice, the charm of his presence, and the magnetism of his eloquence, held the union together through many stormy

periods, but he left us the "American system" which but for Jackson would have wrecked the ship of our infant state in 1833 and at the end of our first century has grown to be an octopus and has made millionaires enough to corrupt the manners and morals of a virtuous universe. So true it is already that the only hope of free government lies in the virtuous instincts of the laboring poor, as Lincoln was wise and good enough to tell us.

To this humble class so blessed by heaven all of his contemporary kin had the high privilege incontestably to belong. But it does not follow that there were not among them both men and women of high moral and intellectual worth and of the highest moral standing in the state of Virginia. There lived in those times in the valley of the Shenandoah, now of bloody memory, ten men of his English great-grandfather's[37] blood that would have reflected no small honor on and afforded no stinted pleasure to the ex-president if he had dwelt in the midst of them. Half their number were farmers, men of character and more than ordinary ability; men who by common consent stood in the forefront of their class, a class among which strict integrity and a high sense of honor were quite as essential as success in business to a man's social position.

They held and their descendants continue to hold every acre of the original rich and fertile land. Neither of them contemporary with him inherited to exceed 160 acres. Only one left less than he had

[37]Alexander Herring, the pioneer.

inherited. He had graduated at two celebrated universities and left nothing. One of these farmers[38] left to his heirs 6,800 acres originally granted to his mother's brother for revolutionary services, this brother having been one of Washington's generals. Two others of these grandsons left over a thousand acres each of fine farm land in a high state of cultivation, still held by their heirs. Two of the grandsons were doctors of no mean capacity. One of these finished his medical career in St. Louis. The other, who destroyed his physical constitution by graduating at the University of Virginia and afterwards at the University of Pennsylvania, a medical institution, died in middle life at the head of his profession in his native country. Two brothers, his great-grandsons, were lawyers and college-bred men of fine literary attainments. One of them[39] graduated at Washington College, now Washington and Lee University. His name is still kept on its roll of graduates as that of the most remarkable of their students for his eloquence. He studied his profession with a very able judge of the circuit who was his uncle.[40] Being a man of exceedingly popular manner and a natural-born stump speaker, an amusement which the Southern people delighted in, he was sent to the legislature as soon as he was old enough. He was soon rated as being the most eloquent member of the body, and that when great men were used to be sent there and when the amazing music of the voice of Patrick Henry still

[38]Alexander Herring, son of William, son of the pioneer.
[39]John Smith Herring, born 1798.
[40]Judge Daniel Smith (1779-1850).

lingered lovingly along the corridors and arches of the classic capitol at Richmond. Like Mr. Lincoln he had a passion for surveying acquired in his boyhood among his native mountains as deputy for his father, who was many years county surveyor, and indulged this taste by accepting a commission to trace and plat Virginia's large military reservation in Western Kentucky. In performing this task he fell a victim to the malaria then so prevalent and fatal in that region and died at Lexington at the age of thirty-two. And great was the grief and pity of all his hosts of friends, for in all the years I have lived and kept watch of public men and events I can recall no senator or congressman from Virginia who was more brilliant, more eloquent, or more able than he.

By a singular fatality two of his younger brothers died young from not dissimilar causes; the eldest on the Illinois River at Pekin, and the other among the everglades in Florida while fighting Osceola under General Taylor. These two brothers[41] were together at West Point about the time of General Sherman's services there, but only the youngsters entered the army. The elder of these two also studied law with his distinguished uncle, one of the best judges I ever practiced before. This second pupil of his was tall, handsome, and exceedingly winsome in manner and possessed a fine and graceful delivery and exceedingly chaste and polished diction both in speaking and writing and was a man of lofty character and chivalrous disposition. He, like his elder brother, early began to thirst for political distinction and was beginning to set

[41] Alexander and Daniel Smith Herring.

his pegs for a congressional career at the time Mr. Lincoln was unfolding the wings of his young genius in the legislature of Illinois. It is not known that they ever met and not at all probable that they were even aware of the close ties of kindred between them. If these brothers—the two lawyers—had lived to a reasonable old age, possessing as they did ambition so similar, though of course not possessing the varied powers of Lincoln, which overtopped those of everybody else, I have no doubt they would have broken the family record and perhaps made some history. They had early breathed the air of that far-famed valley to which Washington was so fond to look for help in his direst need and which furnished Stonewall Jackson with that bloody band of heroes that were so proud to make of him the Phil Sheridan of the second Rebellion. They had in their veins the blood of a general of the Revolution, one of Washington's braves.[42] Their father had volunteered to fight the British in 1812 when he was over sixty and one of his sons was only sixteen.

As for the soldier who succumbed to the fatal climate of Florida[43] in the hottest of summer, and was not even allowed to taste the sweets of dying on the battlefield, no mortal can dare to forecast a career for a soldier, however long the fates may see fit to spare life to him. It takes many things besides intellectual ability and courage, and even opportunity, to make a great soldier. I only know that he

[42]Reference here is evidently to Major David Stephenson, whose sister married Alexander Herring, son of William.
[43]Daniel Smith Herring.

had graduated well from West Point, that he had the most accomplished manner and the most brilliant conversational power of all the men I ever met, and that I loved him as Jonathan loved David. He gave his life for his country, yet no grateful stone even marks the place where his ashes rest.

Of these two gentlemen and their sisters, too, of no mean gifts, I have only this to add: I have lived with four generations of men; I have dwelt in many states and known many good people well; I have drifted from the Atlantic to the Rockies with the inimitable American border life where strong men loved to congregate, but I have never known an equal number of people of one generation and one strain of blood of equal mental and moral strength and culture. By careful marriages physical characteristics can readily be transmitted. No doubt, single moral and mental traits are often handed down, but the mystic combination that fits a man for greatness occurs only in the crucible of nature and even then he must be tormented with a sleepless thirst for the myth of fame and still more must nature take him in her lap and furnish high occasion to display his powers.

Mr. Lincoln had many strains of good blood in his veins of which there flowed in greater part the rich royal blood of the laboring poor, but it was only after his armies had conquered in a hundred rebellious fields that he was able to stand on the graves of his patriotic dead and utter words that will be recited and read in farthest ages and farthest countries as long as the centuries shall last and patriotic fervor shall find room in human hearts.

Patrick Henry with his single great power could warm and beat and melt the giddy Colonial youth by the electric spark that was leaping fresh and hot and instant from his lips to offer himself as food for bullets and worms, but when the blaze died out with the dragging years, only Washington was there with his higher varied powers and persistent care to keep the smouldering fires alive in the weary worn veteran's heart and we went free.

The Virginia relations of Mr. Lincoln, whom I have been endeavoring to describe, were not Lincolns at all excepting his grandmother, and she only became one after her marriage. Her people, as I said, belonged on Cook Creek in the south part of Rockingham County, and the Lincolns lived in the north part on Linville Creek[44] and were an entirely different strain of people. The first Lincoln to come into the county came before the county[45] was organized, when the land was all in the original wilderness. With a most extraordinarily good judgment, or good fortune, or both, he selected one of the very best all purpose tracts of land between the Atlantic and the Rockies and made a home out of it that it has pleased his descendants to occupy ever since. He must have been a man imbued with the profoundest religious sentiments, as he rushed for the Bible every time one of his children was born and called them one after another Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But strange to say Jacob was born first[46] and the property all fell

[44]Both creeks head within a mile or so of each other, to the west of Harrisonburg.

[45]Rockingham.

[46]Jacob was the third son. See later references.

to him under the law of England, then in force. Jacob took the land and left his brothers to provide for themselves, but he made the best amends he could by leading his company into tide-water Virginia to fight the British and brought back a few negroes to help him cultivate his farm. He left three sons, but got the names a little bit jumbled and they ran, David, Jacob, and Abraham, so little attention did he pay to Biblical chronology. These three sons of Captain Jacob were contemporary with the ex-president, and I knew them fairly well personally. They were stout, blocky men of medium height, full habit, florid complexion, and quick tempers. They owned the best land in the country—enough and no more of it, and farmed it in the very best manner. They borrowed no money and had none to lend. Their word was as good as their bond. They could read, write, and cipher, and that was as much as they cared for. If they ever heard a sermon I guess it was at a funeral. They were partisan democrats of the straightest sect. One of them (David) ordered me out of his house for criticising, rather sharply perhaps, Jackson's administration. I refused to go because his house was a "public," and he readily forgave me.

None of the brothers ever craved any but military offices. They went to every war that occurred anywhere convenient and always went as captain, fought well, and came back captain. Abraham advanced several grades during a long peace and was a militia colonel, but no war occurred in his time except the

war with Mexico and that was outside of militia jurisdiction. A son of David Lincoln wore the honored name of Abraham and bore himself nobly at Bull Run as a captain of a company on the rebel side and begged to be allowed to go on to Washington, but was restrained by Mr. Davis, who had won glory enough to bank on for several years after.

These three brothers of Mr. Lincoln's generation, David, Abraham, and Jacob, lived in good houses, built large barns, planted large orchards, kept fat horses and sleek cattle, and were happy and satisfied with their most honorable vocation.

These model farmers of Linville Creek had two sisters like them, and yet not altogether like them. They were mild and gentle and housewifely women. They were not accomplished except only as wives and mothers should be. The wedded name of one of them was Coffman. The husband was gentle and kind and respected by his neighbors, a master of his craft and not a worshipper of money. In all that he was like her. Her family admired and loved her greatly. Her children were handsome and well grown and well brought up. They were all of them with her or nestled close around her. Their farm was on Cook Creek, one of the two royal streams that drain the richest and most beautiful fields in the world, gently undulating to their banks, and furnishing fecund irrigation to unrivaled meadows. Their farm was a very gem of that region. Each field seemed to outrival the field that adjoined it. Their house was comfortable and commodious; the barn

was large and fairly bursting out with the harvest it garnered. But a morning came upon them that was loaded with a deep and unutterable anguish. It was a veritable war morning and only one word describes such a morning—"War is hell." The weather was warm, the sky had been blue and clear, and men were already afield exhilarant with genial toil, and the furrows turned up smooth and glistening. But anon dense pillars of angry smoke were everywhere mounting skyward and coming abreast like an army marching. General Sheridan had long encamped among those scenes. He had been wont to kindle houses out of inconsiderate wrath, out of unfounded suspicion. If a favorite "aid" should fall in battle he would seize his torch and make it hell for women and children. Perhaps it was religious, but it was not the religion of Washington. The word flew everywhere on these angry smoke columns that Sheridan was retreating and firing the country he could not conquer, and all was consternation. The troopers came rushing on with their torches. Mrs. Coffman ceased to be a woman and became suddenly a Lincoln. She greeted them gently but calmly and told them that her maiden name was Lincoln, and that she was first cousin to the President. The brave fellows saluted and disobeyed orders, and Abby Lincoln's farm went unharmed.

My father's brother[47] married the other sister, but I can't remember her. Her father left her a fair legacy and two slaves — Scipio Africanus and Anne.

[47] Joseph Chrisman.

She lived only a short time to bless my uncle and left little Jack to the tender care of her doting slave woman. Through all the days of our early years Jack was my double. We slept in the same bed, studied of the same books, and were exactly of the same size, tastes, and disposition. We attended the same college, and Jack became a very elegant and accomplished writer. During all these years he was the sun, moon, and stars to old Anne. His mother's paternal legacy went into a farm for him, and Anne made it home for him with religious care and comfort. Right fondly he cherished and honored her, and when her days were about to be numbered he sat constantly for many days at her bedside and sorrowing for his friend of friends received her last lingering conscious gaze as the light of life went out of a beautiful picture of a fond master and willing slave.

Jack grew lonely and sad without his old "mammy" and married a beautiful and accomplished lady. He was an honorable, scholarly man and as free from the love of money as his great cousin. He died recently of simple old age, county treasurer at Bozeman, Montana, and his daughter Bettie, the most beautiful of women, is county superintendent of schools in that county.

This is the last I have to say of Mr. Lincoln's blood relations. Of the mother's relations I knew nothing; of herself I only know and believe, from all I have heard from others, that she was sensible, noble, and good and poor, and well fit to be the mother of the

best man of modern times. And now I will do myself the pleasure to say that according to my best information and judgment no president ever had better blood in his veins or was more honorably connected than Abraham Lincoln.

LINCOLN BEFORE HE WAS GREAT

The first time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln was in 1856. He was known about Springfield as an honest man that everybody liked. He was known in the courts round about as a good trial lawyer, and a good story-teller about the tavern fire. He was even accounted a good stump speaker and something of a politician, in a small way. But if anybody had ventured to call him a great man, he would have been violating the modesty of nature, and his listener would have felt shocked. Douglas was the single great man of the northwest. He had filled every office and was senator at the time. Chicago was a country town, and, though the largest in the west, was to all appearances the meanest in the lot. The houses were all wooden, the streets were all mud, and the mud was exceedingly sticky and very deep. But she thought herself a great city, as in commerce she was; and Douglas, not without equal reason, thought himself a very great man. His equal has not lived there before or since. He had struck the strings of the harp of fame in 1850, and struck them hard. He walked the streets in all the pride of his manly beauty and the full consciousness of his power. He had dared a few years before to step outside the ranks of party and aid the democratic contingent to pass Clay's last great Compromise Bill which turned back the hands on the clock of war, and

enabled that grand old statesman of majestic mien and melodious voice now tremulous with natural age and patriotic toil to go down to his rest in peace.

Lincoln on the contrary had had only a single term in congress and left no mark. He could tread a crowded street, towering above all other men, as free from self-consciousness as any blanket Indian, and with that same far-away look in his eyes that denoted not some hidden grief, but only deep thought. The first time I ever saw him was in his law office down in Springfield in the autumn of 1856. Chicago was then in its highest, wildest boom. Many bargain operators in corner lots began to quail. Four of us met and took account of stock, and decided to close out our several deals. We all began to love the prairie grass and the wild flowers and the innocent joys of the quiet country life, and to inquire of each other as to where it would be best to locate. The latitude of Springfield in the grand prairie proved to be the general choice—$1.25 an acre was the most approved price. Good land at that price in large tracts had grown scarce, while there was decidedly nothing small about us. It was then remembered that under the swamp land laws of the United States, the state of Illinois had quietly got title to a large acreage of the finest farm land in the world without a speck of swamp on or near it. The choice pieces were held at boom prices. It was promptly advised to be our duty, if possible, to restore these lands to the general government on the equitable grounds of fraud or mistake, and then enter them at government price. With the usual celerity of Chicago men we proceeded

to examine the land and prepare the proofs. After finding 100 quarter sections suited to our taste, which would give each man 4,000 acres for his modest home at the reasonable first cost of $5,000, we cast about for a lawyer to put the "job" through. Various names were suggested, Mr. Lincoln's among the rest. It was admitted that he would not undertake a bad land case and, as he lived in a land office town, it was conceded that he would be most likely to know the law, or at any rate know how to find it, which we didn't.

So down we rushed to Springfield and upstairs to his office, never doubting that we virtually had four of the finest farms in our clutches to be found in the round world, and that, too, at a price beyond the reach of financial depression, or any ghost of possible danger from any source. We found the office dark and dingy, as was the fashion in those primitive days everywhere west, and very plainly furnished. A man was "scrooched" low in a chair with his elbows on his knees and a book in his hands reading law for dear life. After quite awhile he looked up and said "howdy," and began to unfold the greatest length of manhood I had ever seen until I became fully satisfied that if his head was as long as his legs he was the very man we wanted and proceeded to state the case. The statement being finished, in order to cut off guessing about the matter, I ventured a little advice to him which was to take time, plenty, and examine thoroughly as we intended to follow his advice, cost what it would, expecting of course that it would be to bring suit. He told us to come back in two

weeks. Promptly at the end of two weeks I presented myself confident to receive an affirmative answer, but to my sore surprise it was bluntly negative—"You can't do it." By that time I had come to fairly dote on country life and prairie grass and 4,000 acres in a farm. I had sold my Chicago margins and was fairly ready to move. I was too stunned at first to find anything to say. Of course the man was honest, for who ever heard of an attorney refusing a fat case before?—I could not have done that myself. The matter of the fee for advice began to run in my mind. Lawyers I knew were accustomed to charge in proportion to the amount involved. The property was worth $25,000 at the government price—now a half million at least. We should have insisted on paying, if encouraged to go on, a handsome cash retainer and a thousand or more in the event of final success. I thought as we had to give it up and take nothing for our share, I would try my best to beat him down to $50, if I could. When he said it was $5, I paid it and went out. When I reached the street I began to feel ashamed of myself for accepting his work for so mere a pittance, and after he was elected president I tried to forget how little it was.

Many years later I had occasion for a lawyer to examine a title in Chicago to a property of not dissimilar value and thought honest father, honest son, and I went to the son. I found an office appointed in the latest fashion and a man about half his father's length. In about two weeks I received an elegant abstract with authorities noted, showing conclusively I could not win, and the fee marked on the papers

was $50. I concluded that the son was as honest as his father, no doubt, and a good enough lawyer for me, but that probably he would have more trouble getting to be president even if he should ever desire that office. Mr. Lincoln seemed to regard his selection as counsel to be a mark of affection for himself and regretted the hard necessity of charging his clients at all. His son probably considered that clients came to him for the best advice to be had in town. At all events he may have realized that he was the son of a president and his father never had been that.

LINCOLN AS A STORY-TELLER

I had heard so much about Mr. Lincoln's story-telling gift that I was anxious to see him on exhibition. He had been so solemn and brief in his office, I could scarcely believe that he ever unbent. It was not long, however, until I had the opportunity to see for myself. Murray McConnell, a lawyer living in his district, of some distinction and more land, brought him to Chicago to try a case about lots, and they stopped at the hotel where I lived. Of course in those days nobody in the boom city could stop to hear a lawsuit unless compelled by order of court. But in the evening after business was over and the candles lit, there would be a few people who were willing to escape their daily grind. It was whispered one of these evenings that the country lawyers were then in the parlor and would no doubt entertain. Quite a little audience dropped in and they felt inspired to begin. McConnell was a good story-teller, but his repertoire was not unlimited, and Lincoln was familiar with his whole stock in trade, whereas Lincoln could both make and tell stories and nobody could ever anticipate him. On that occasion he acted as master of ceremonies and would call for such a story by name as he wanted McConnell to tell, and after laughing at it as heartily as anybody else, he would without request tell one of his own. He never laughed once at his own story, but would give a slight chuckle to start the laugh and then sober up. The

fun ran fast and furious till bedtime, and I don't think any of the company ever before laughed as much. He was far the best story-teller I ever met, and excepting his father and his uncle Mordecai, of whom I have heard, he was without a rival in that art.

THE JOINT DISCUSSION

Lincoln and Douglas

The war with Mexico was as wicked and unjustifiable as the war on the Transvaal. Mr. Lincoln, along with all the Whig party, opposed it. It was a Southern measure. For the South it was worse than a crime — it was a great blunder. It was absolute fatuity. Like all great crimes, usually, it brought condign punishment on its authors and instigators, and it fell out that Mr. Lincoln was the instrument. The North had patiently submitted to the annexation of Texas. The North even consented that Texas be divided into five states and elect ten senators—a most wonderful magnanimity. But the South wanted both southern expansion and northern repression. The South, then as always before, owned the administration. A Southern man was president, a Southern man was his foreign secretary. They desired to expand along the gulf and didn't care much for the north Pacific coast. They gave England nearly six degrees, 400 miles, of that coast line, between Washington and Alaska with small demur and against the platform on which the people had chosen them, and went to war for an equal slice of Gulf coast. A very good way, very manly and honorable way, when a rich man wants his neighbor's little field, is to at least offer to buy it before drawing his revolver to force the owner to pull down his fences.

Many very good people have ventured to think that would have been admissible in our Philippine

business. Without stopping to parley with Mexico, we marched an army into what had always been her territory and grandly took what we wanted. But what we got was an unbroken land, and turned out to be unfit for slavery. The North, which had hitherto been patient and submissive, began to grow expansive and "drew the line" on what was unfit for slavery. This brought on the usual threats of secession. This new danger to the Union brought Henry Clay back from his retirement, and with the help of Webster and Douglas, a grand and patriotic trio, passed his great compromise, which it was hoped would forever dispose of the slavery question. This hope, however, soon proved a delusion. The South soon found that her Mexican Conquest had forever and forever destroyed the last hope of the "Equilibrium." As usual the South still threatened secession. To head off another cyclone, Mr. Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska bill which gave occasion to the far-famed joint discussion which destroyed Douglas and elected Lincoln president. Up to the time of the introduction of this fateful bill, Douglas had been a "blooming success" in politics, while Lincoln had walked humbly in the shadow of a remorseless majority, doubtless nursing his unsuspected rivalry not without a manly jealousy, waiting for Douglas to make a "bad break." This was bad enough in all conscience, and all the worse because it was his first one in all those tedious years of Lincoln's waiting. When Douglas first came home to Chicago, after submitting his bill, he was met by a howling mob, threatening to rend him. This, however, only brought out an unsuspected element in his nature — his grand and masterful personal courage. He faced them like a

lion in his lair, roared them into sullen silence, and then bravely and grandly delivered his oration of self-defense.

But he was now soon to stand for reelection to the senate. Lincoln saw his opportunity was come at last. His long-feigned modesty was laid aside like an ill-worn garment, and he came forth, sling in hand, confident and exultingly to meet his Goliath. His best friends were atremor at his rashness. Such is the painful distance the people are used to measure off betwixt greatness developed and greatness in embryo. It was bad enough for Lincoln to enter himself even for a still hunt against the greatest orator and statesman of the United States senate. But when Lincoln threw his flag to the breeze, emblazoned with a mad challenge to a joint discussion, which only too plainly meant "war to the knife and knife to the hilt," people stood aghast and the general verdict was that the modesty of nature was overstepped—an untried advocate of an untried party against the full trained leader of the old historical party, the party of Jefferson, the party of Jackson. Lincoln alone seemed stupidly unconscious of his danger, or the incongruity of the situation. He made his first address alone in Chicago. I didn't go to hear it. The speech, if it didn't fall flat, was plainly not inspiriting. I did not like anybody's politics at that time, and especially not Lincoln's. I feared his politics would destroy the Union, and with me the Union was a fetish. I had been taught to believe the Union was a rope of sand—the South would break it up like a joint snake whenever she was mad enough. I had always considered the war against Mexico as unpro-

voked and as wicked as England's war against the bravest race of men and women in Christendom — a race whose only offense is to say the Lord's prayer and read the Sermon on the Mount—England's perfected travesty on Christianity. I confess myself superstitious. I had long dreaded condign punishment on my unhappy native section, all the more perhaps since I was living in exile so far away from it. I hated a secessionist; I detested an abolitionist. I had lived for some time in Illinois, but had never voted any ticket. I considered both their positions nocuous. Before the joint discussions were reached, the democrats were jubilant and pitiless with jibes and jeers for Lincoln. The republicans were tremulous and silent. The first joint meetings were held in southern Illinois, then well-nigh as southern as South Carolina, and the democrats claimed the victory, but not immodestly. There it was the august senator "speaking down" at the unarmored citizen. He so far forgot his dignity as to speak even rudely of his undistinguished opponent. But when they had been heard at Galesburg (then, if not even still, the Athens of Illinois), the republicans boldly claimed equality and the democrats no longer disputed it. It was, however, in northwestern Illinois, the region that afterwards furnished a Grant to the army and a Washburn to the national counsels, that Lincoln drew his fatal weapon and threw away the scabbard. It was there that, at the risk of defeating himself for the senate, he determined to "kill" Douglas for the presidency and propounded these fateful, fearful questions to Douglas on popular sovereignty. Douglas felt

at once that the blow was vital and took the questions "under advisement." It was of no avail to ponder. If he answered one way he must lose the South; if the other way he must lose the North; without both he could not be president, and Lincoln had won the victory. But the end of the discussion left them the two greatest intellects of their generation in America. The sequel proved the one as patriotic as the other. Douglas spent his dying breath trying to rally the brave Northwest to the support of Lincoln and the country, when the fate of the country hung in the balance and the northwest held the scales. Lincoln, more favored, oozed out his life-blood rejoicing over the final victory. With the generous and essential assistance of Douglas, he had saved his country. It had never happened before and most likely will never happen again that two men, first rivals in love, and so long rivals in politics, have been allowed to fraternize so nobly and on so grand and vital an occasion as did Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln on the altar of their country and that, too, on the instant when the life of this great nation was passing through the very agony of threatened dissolution.

Adams and Jefferson developed a senile friendship after their blood had grown thin and their steps become feeble, and even that looks handsome in a picture. But the friendship of Douglas and Lincoln was the instinct of two giant men in all the pride of life and was possibly essential to the greatest glory and happiness and power of the Anglo-Saxon race.

VITAL CAUSES OF OUR CIVIL WAR

The evil genius of the South was expansion. The evil genius of the North was development. In the early part of the century it was hard to tell which was the nearest like a paradise, the North or the South. The one had the land, the other had the sea, and there was breathing space for all men. In the South the fresh soil was fecund and easy. The gin had been invented; King Cotton was in his boyhood and springtime was about him. The planter was well in his vigor with no thought for the future, his wife was in her girlhood, his children were small. His home was among the pines and the oaks, where the birds were pairing and nesting and the bobolinks were singing to their mates. Even the fishes disported in the stream that ran by the house; the grass on the lawns was beginning to grow green and the early flowers to peep through the winter-browned sod. The white oaks were in the distance and the clearing still beyond. The dusky laborer went forth with his hoe to tickle the small plant and keep its bed clear of tares. His glad song resounded, his heart was opening to let in the morning, and he was tasting the joys of employment easy and light. The sunlight was dancing on the leaves of the forest that everywhere surrounded; the holding was large. No neighbors to spy, and the fat slaves were being lifted out of the savagery that had cursed their fathers with cruelty and death, and they were well clothed and well fed, well cared for in sickness and in health and were

contented, happy, and loyal; their sunshine was glorious and their sky unclouded and bright.

But the same sweet light tipped the mountain peaks in the far-away North, the breath of the morning was as invigorating and pure, the bird notes were as wild, the meadows as green, the streams were more limpid, the waters brighter, the speckled trout leaped higher at the fly, and the blue-eyed maidens, if not more lovable, were at least more fair and the men were as sturdy, if not more brave, for Bunker Hill was not far away and they greeted their Southern cousins with a most rare joy and ardent embrace as they came bounding over the Atlantic waves to taste once more the summer joy the North only could give; nor did they dream a day ever could come when all this love would turn to horrid hate. But such times and scenes were not good for man and mayhap turned his heart from God, and quick development was sent like forbidden fruit to Eden's bower to teach him how to grieve and mourn. Soon the waterfalls were hammered down and rock-buttressed fast, the streams were fouled, and fishes fled, and mills belched out their smoke, and boys and girls were shut in to become white slaves. People were imported and enticed to swell the profits of petted lords till sweatshops and soup-houses took the place of joyous plenty and repose and with the help of fiction, poesy, the pulpit, and the platform, black hatred took the place of love, and the South was made to feel and know that by her many and vast expansions, while full in federal power, devoted by her own consent to freedom and the Northern weal, she had built a hostile cordon about herself and cut off all power to emigrate her African people whom she had redeemed when

naked and defenseless from cannibal masters and idol worship and taught to know and serve their God. She could see at last that her ever-increasing negro population was to be dammed back upon her exhausted fields and she must set them free and drive some off and live with others unrestrained and growing daily more idle and vicious till life would become intolerable for either race.

It was then the wild panic seized her. Dreading to see her well-restrained, but half barbarian slaves, let loose and relapsed, not knowing how great and gentle and just our Lincoln was, she madly resolved to fight her way out of the trap she herself had blindly set and brought upon herself emancipation, reconstruction, negro suffrage, and disfranchisement of the whites, and upon the poor negroes she had nurtured, cherished, and restrained by far gentler means, first the Ku-klux, and after that the burning stake by Judge Lynch, to exercise those brutal instincts begot of suns and climes which had slept through slavery's watchful care, but were not extinct. And now let the apostles who helped the hypnotic Davis preach this craze to life go with their families to reside among their unfettered wards and by gospel songs and holy prayers exorcise this lurid heat from dusky veins that has made the plantation unfit for man's abode, or cease from troubling forevermore. Their power to afflict an Anglo-Saxon race at last has ceased, and their theory of the equality of the races, whether yellow, black, or brown with white, has become a byword and a putrid scorn.

To allay this storm with gentle words or flood it out with blood after the election, became at once the task

of the president-elect. We next shall see how he first essayed the gentler way.

Lincoln had no thought of disturbing slavery where it was and would have been both glad and able to protect it in the states, and only asked to exclude it from the territories, and there it could not live anyhow. If Davis, having let his golden opportunity escape, had been as wise and self-contained as he was astute and brilliant, there would have been no civil war, no military emancipation, no reconstruction, no black enfranchisement, no white disfranchisement, no Ku-klux, no lynch court, no burning at the stake, no hell upon earth in the unhappy cotton belt. And all so needless and deplorable as we have come to see it, for we no longer "see through a glass darkly," but know of our own knowledge, and have been well taught by our English cousins, that it is not only the right, but the divinely appointed duty of the Anglo-Saxon race, wherever found, to guide and direct, to rule and comfort, to educate and civilize, to subjugate and govern the yellow man, the brown man, and the black man, and all other inferior people, in which we may yet be forced to include, sooner or later, the once all-conquering Latin race.

It is just possible that impartial history, when the far future comes to write it, will not sustain the verdict of the 19th century on Mr. Davis. It has pleased many to draw him as a sort of American Aguinaldo. History may rather elect to compare him with Hannibal. The Carthagenian saw that either Rome or Carthage had to be destroyed. He proceeded grandly till the game was fairly in his reach, and then rested till he lost it. Davis may come to be painted as a man of wonderful prevision. He may be allowed to

have seen that the North must be crippled or the South would be crushed. He will be admitted to have been a man of very vast and varied powers. As an orator his power over his people was phenomenal. As a fighter he must rank even higher than Hannibal, if such a thing were possible. As an organizer of what he called a "conspiracy" he must stand without a rival. The election of a man so exactly suited to his purpose for president as Mr. Buchanan was an inspiration. The distribution of his cabinet among his own ablest and most trustworthy lieutenants, interlarded with only a single senile "northern man with southern principles," was a colossal stroke of policy. With a "secret understanding" with both the English and French administrations, and the army and navy and treasury in his own very keeping, that he should have sat down and waited for such a man as Lincoln to be elected, and then waited for him to be inaugurated and accede to the army, the navy, and the United States treasury is so very wonderful and patent a blunder as to more than satisfy people of a religious turn of mind that "his eyes were holden." And even then all was not lost that was worth the saving, if "his eyes had not been holden."

To a man like Davis and a people like his followers, the dream of a grand military empire based on slavery and hugging around the Gulf Coast, expanded from Texas around till it touched British Guiana, was doubtless most ravishing. And for a commercial people like us of the Anglo-Saxon race, such an expansion as that, taken in connection with rejuvenated Cuba and Porto Rico, Africa and the Philippines, and all the other loose-lying islands, might have proved something of a saving grace for

the sin of allowing the sons of Ham to be any longer held for the servants of servants as they were appointed to be by the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob soon after he came out of Noah's Ark.

Governments have been known to manumit the slaves of other people, but no government ever did manumit its own slaves. To free a lot of Africans and live amongst them is abhorrent. Our Northern slave-holding ancestors sold their slaves to Southern masters and then ordered them to free them. To compel them to do this we proposed to "surround the South with a wall of fire" so that they could not move the negroes and would be finally compelled, not only to free the negroes, but to give their land to them to live on, and cross the wall of fire themselves and hunt new homes. It might have been better for them to submit and temporize till we overtook the expansion craze, and felt and saw the evident needs of commerce, and then they might have possessed themselves of the whole South America and filled it up with slaves in the interest of commerce, and we might have felt it a pious duty to send an army to subjugate the natives. So much does the sin of a thing depend upon the date of it and the state of Christianity when it happens. Mr. Davis was not born to Caesar's fortune. He was too slow to assume Buchanan's place, too prompt to challenge Lincoln, and met the fate of Hannibal. History sheds fluent tears for the hard lot of Hannibal and his country. It may come to have some sympathy for Davis and his gallant Anglo-Saxon people in a much shorter time than it has taken in the case of Carthage.

DAVIS AND HIS OPPORTUNITY

It was a bright morning in June, in the year 1860. I was standing on the front steps of the Capitol looking lovingly through the foliage out upon the river and across at the green hills of my native state, Virginia. Lincoln had been nominated, the Charleston (Democratic) convention had broken up in a row, and delegates were at Baltimore to start Mr. Douglas on his last great race. A friend passing by whispered in my ear that Mr. Davis had decided to elect Lincoln and withdraw the Southern States from the Union. What could I do about it? It was many months till election; would be many more before inauguration. The President was a feeble old man with no wife and no son to hold up his hands and easily hypnotized by members of his cabinet. General Cass and General Scott were senile like himself, and everybody else in authority was in sympathy with Mr. Davis. The army was virtually his ally, and the city itself was palpitating for his embrace.

If he had been a Bonaparte he would have done in one night what he failed in four years of bloody battle to accomplish. He would have seized the Capitol, dispersed Congress, imprisoned the few that were dangerous, and proclaimed a revolution, and made it *uni facto accomplis*. But he was no midnight Conspirator. That he was a dreamer all will allow; but he was a brave gentleman and challenged to a fair field always. His dream wears now so strange an aspect, the world cannot comprehend it. A Republic

in which the black men should do the work, and the white men eat the fruit thereof! It was a paradise too antiquated to stand in the face of the nineteenth century. His Statue of Liberty was to be of the purest white marble quarried from the side of Mount Pentelicus and shaped by Phinean hands into the most graceful curves and voluptuous form with a black Nubian chained to its ankles. He had decided to abandon the Capitol, proclaim his plans in far-off Mississippi, and come north with the advancing tide of State Sovereignty resumed and asserted.

Future ages will be in danger of misjudging him for a fool or a madman. I have asserted he was not mad. The history of the four years that followed shows only too clearly his vast ability. Up to that morning in June, I had both feared and hated him, myself a worshipper of the Union preferring it above liberty itself. From that time I ceased to hate, and even ventured to remonstrate. But of course a great Senator perched on such a pinnacle could not listen to a voice so deep down in the valley, even if it reached him like a faint whisper. But the words seem so nearly prophetic I must reproduce them. I told him that he would destroy the very institution he strove to perpetuate; that we of the North should not be divided, but united; that we should invade him with three columns; that we should turn the negroes loose on him and inspire them to love freedom; that we should harass him with fire and sword and make him a pauper. In a case of sudden and appalling danger human nature resolves itself into its first elements. All thought of antecedents and of rank is forgotten, and the man from whom we least expect it is often impelled inscrutably.

Mr. Davis, clothed in all the panoply of his station and his great fame as both soldier and statesman, took leave, both solemn and sad, from his place in the Senate, and started for his home, irrevocably bent on the destruction of the Union. I crossed the Potomac with just as strangely fixed a purpose to prevent him, and with as strange a confidence. I fixed my hopes upon Mr. Lincoln. I knew him well and had measured him carefully. To me he was a stronger man than Mr. Davis and would lead a stronger section. But for one thing the result must be inevitable. If Mr. Davis reached the Capitol first, the chances would be reversed. The North would divide on party lines, and help would come to Davis from abroad and none to Lincoln. In that case Lincoln's innate strength would not avail against such mighty odds. The Capitol must be preserved somehow, anyhow, till Lincoln became president. Then after that the deluge. Mr. Davis would not attempt to cross Virginia until she seceded, for fear she might assert her dignity and bar his passage. To detach my dear old native state from a scheme in every way so heartrending and anxious, was a work that would warm any heart however cold, and inspire any brain however feeble. I recall that the dear old State had long been divided very closely between the two parties.

LINCOLN'S CHARACTER

Remembering Julius Caesar's motto, so often repeated in his Memoirs, during his Gallic Wars, that "Celerity is the whole art of war," I appointed myself, on the spot, first missionary to Virginia, and in less than an hour I was on a train steaming forth. Before sundown I found myself receiving the cordial greetings of my schoolmates and barmates in the great stronghold of both the Whig and Douglas parties, whose leaders were dwelling together in the greatest harmony and under not the least excitement. I recited to them Mr. Davis's program which I had just received in Washington, from a source they recognized as infallible as well-nigh fresh from his own lips.

I then introduced Mr. Lincoln, who was to them an absolutely unknown quantity. It happened fortunately that Mr. Lincoln had been my counsel in my only matters of importance in Illinois.

I had thus learned to know for myself the moral side of his nature with absolute certainty and much of his history that was admitted on all sides as being absolute facts.

His most rare integrity was demonstrated to me in my own business. His devotion to the constitution of the United States was a part of his religion; like Mr. Jefferson, he was frankly opposed upon principle to the spread of slavery into any unoccupied territory belonging to the United States, but he disclaimed any right in the Federal Government to in-

terfere in any manner with slavery in the states where it existed, and would defend, with all the power that might be conferred upon him under the constitution, any state that remained loyal to the constitution and the laws enacted under it, in all the rights conferred upon it by that sacred instrument.

But while opposed to the extension of slavery into territory then free, he was in no sense a fanatic and had never been claimed as one by any of their own best families who had been among the earliest slaveholders. He had married into a slaveholding family in Kentucky, who had nearly all emigrated from Southern States and loved their native place almost as well as if not better than their adopted home. Under such circumstances, there was small likelihood that Lincoln would cherish any harsh feeling in his kindly nature against any loyal people.

Fully aroused to their danger by this fresh news of Mr. Davis's program, and delighted with any prospect of escape from the dangers they had apprehended and dreaded, they adopted with alacrity the suggestion to organize a party to vote down secession at the polls.

Men of talent and influence, in whom they were very rich at the time, were rapidly communicated with; and soon the party was completely organized for that purpose, and their most powerful orators were mounting the stumps, advocating this cause, and the trend of public sentiment was running rapidly in its favor.

The time for the presidential election was rapidly approaching. I had lived in the house with Mr. Douglas during two of his vacations; I considered

that his lofty patriotism and utter freedom from sectionalism deserved my support, and, feeling happy in the situation in Virginia, I went cheerily home to vote for him, though recognizing fully the utter hopelessness of his election. When the returns came in, showing that Lincoln was elected, all the politicians were happy except the supporters of Douglas; they were all mad, and singular enough their wrath was all poured out on Lincoln and none of it reserved for Davis, although Davis had done more to strengthen the republican party than Lincoln himself, by his virulent denunciations of the Northern people and his constant assertion of the vested rights for slavery in the unoccupied territory of the United States, where at most the Southern people could have had but a sentimental claim to a share of it.

In fact, many of the Douglas politicians seemed to take a melancholy pleasure in recalling Davis's brilliant conduct on the field of battle, his polished eloquence in the United States Senate, and his very ingenious, not to say very able support, of the Jeffersonian government philosophy.

This temper of theirs was far from assuring, when it obviously required a United North to carry the government safely; to sustain the government through the storm that was so plainly visible above the edge of the horizon.

THE HOPE OF SAVING VIRGINIA

I fancied that Douglas would have following enough if it could be joined to a unanimous Whig vote to carry an election handsomely. The Whigs loved the Union and hated Davis. The Douglas men hated Davis and loved the Union. Here was a common ground for them to meet on. I visited every one of the leading gentlemen of these two classes that I knew personally, and wrote letters to all the rest; but it had the best effect to see them. They were all cool and calm, as yet, and still loved the Union, next best to Slavery. They all felt that in case of war the border states must lose slaves in prodigious numbers. None wanted war, and all would rather not risk rebellion. But there was a point of honor involved, and there was the greatest trouble with every one of them.

It was not whether Mr. Lincoln would protect Slavery where it existed. I could usually after great labor satisfy them he would rather do that than go to war. They considered him a "black abolitionist" and a low-born churl. I assured them he had never been claimed by the abolitionists nor classed with that party where he lived. He had always been an old-time Whig, a conspicuous leader in that party, in fact the apostle whom Mr. Clay loved. Born in Kentucky, married to a Kentucky lady of the slave-holding class, his whole life had been spent among Kentuckians, for his part of Illinois was settled almost entirely from the South and many of that class of exiles were

more intensely pro-slavery than slaveholders themselves and were the authors of the "black laws" of Illinois. This coupled with his amiable and law-abiding disposition, to which I with all the world could testify, knowing him personally as I did, they could endeavor to believe me.

All this had a soothing effect. They were well accustomed to living under Northern presidents, a fact of which I reminded them, not forgetting Mr. Fillmore, who though long classed as a free-soiler, had proved highly satisfactory.

Of course I said nothing about Lincoln's birth. It suited his partisans at the North to pose him as of the very humblest birth. True, I would have had to recall his ancestors, of whom they all knew in Rockingham, but that was too trifling to talk about in any such connection. The truth of history might require me to say if I wrote for publication that they had small need to blush for his blood. The Lincolns were of the best fighting stock in Virginia; went to every war they could get to and always as officers, and fought with no mean fury when they got there, as Washington could testify. But he was also equally allied by blood to "the ancient family of Herrings," who were an "ancient family" as early as the reign of Edward the Fourth, and had, as my mother used to tell me, along with her "Aunt Waterman"—for whom he had the profoundest reverence and the deepest affection—the only really blue blood in the Shenandoah Valley. But who in this age cared anything for the blood of a Gladstone, or a Bismarck, or a Washington, who have built pyramids to live in through the remotest ages?

But we must not lose sight of the point of honor, a thing that Virginians never yet forgot, and which as near as we can now see was the sole cause of the war, as I shall try to illustrate a little later. With entire unanimity these gentlemen agreed to hold their following till after the inauguration, and "wait for the overt act" against slavery. With this arrangement I went home happy, and cast my first democratic vote for Mr. Douglas. But after the returns from the Presidential election came in I found myself again disquieted. The Douglas men were in bad blood and, strange to say, instead of blaming Mr. Davis, who had throttled their chief, they manifested no mean sympathy with him, which seemed to threaten a divided North, and actually did develop "copperhead" organizations that smacked of a very sad danger, and on which the secessionists were reckoning for active aid in the near future. At first I went to Chicago to confer with some of the people who had builded most for Mr. Lincoln. I found them ebullient with the joy of victory and the near approach of the long expected honors that follow in its wake. They soon became satisfied that their honors were likely to be more military than civil.

VISIT TO SPRINGFIELD

With a quick reliance on Mr. Lincoln that seems to have been instinctive they urged me at once to present myself without delay at Springfield. Having "volunteered for the war," and armed with a letter assuring him that I would in no case take office, I went on the next train and presented their letter. When I found him he was settled in a large bare room in the Capitol with two old chairs, a long old pine table, a likeness of Henry Clay on the wall, and a silver burnished axe with maul and wedges standing in one corner. Not a book, or a paper, was on the table, and he was alone apparently engaged in solemn contemplation, the farthest possible from elation. He barely shook my hand and sat down to read the letter. When he had finished reading he jumped up and came at me with both hands extended saying, with effusion, "I am glad you have come to me in this way. You are the first of your people who have been here. I was afraid none of you were coming." With that we entered at once into conference.

I explained to him what I was doing to try to save the Capitol for his inauguration, and if possible the State of Virginia for herself, as well as for the Country; but there was an undercurrent at work there that looked dangerous. In every town the boys were training in burnished uniforms and glistening arms, under military officers from the Institute; and with a

look in their eyes that seemed to portend anger. He asked what my plans would be besides holding the Capitol. I replied to hold the Border States by diplomacy and give the Cotton States time for reflection.

He seemed to think this was the only thing we could work at and began to ask of his kindred in Rockingham. He had long known a little of the Lincolns there, but was evidently in profound ignorance of the Herrings. I asked him if he knew the maiden name of his grandmother. "I think I have heard them say her name was Herring." I then told him that my mother and his grandmother were of the same family. He jumped to his feet again and remarked, "I have at last found a man with some of the same blood in his veins that I have in mine. Let's go down to the house." He walked so fast on his long legs, that he almost kept me running, and finding "Mary" in the parlor he exclaimed that he had found a kinsman. We soon adjourned to his office to further consider the public situation. He then asked me how many of my Virginia friends were "Union men per se." When I answered him, "Two," he seemed to realize how very carefully the business needed our best attention, and directed me to "pass all porters and come" to him whenever and wherever I wanted; my business was first.

Of course we watched Virginia with sleepless anxiety, both reading my letters from there as fast as they came, sometimes at my hotel, sometimes at his office—wherever we could confer most privately, keeping our eyes fixed on the Capitol at Washington, which we both regarded vital to possess. You will

recall that the Union party carried the election of members to the Convention by a majority that seemed overwhelming, but some however failed to feel elated, and from these came a very alarming letter from John Baldwin, stating that the sand was sinking under them and asking for the best platform Mr. Lincoln dare send them to stand on. Now here comes that terrible point of terror that cost Virginia everything but her honor. Everybody knew on both sides that there was no "territory" left where slavery ever would, or could, go; but the naked empty constitutional right to take it there was the point to be settled, then and there, definitely, at every cost to both sides. He read the letter in my room and at once realizing its gravity asked to have it over night.

THE RACE FOR WASHINGTON

Mr. Lincoln was very anxious to avoid a resort to arms and, however earnestly, and for a long time even hopefully, he strove, as I happen to know, to prevent the need of it, it was an impossibility with him. It was in my room, we two being then alone, in a hotel in Springfield, a few days after the Virginia election at eight o'clock in the morning that he first reached the conclusion that war between the sections had to come, and that very soon.

He was so overwhelmed with the anguish of the conviction that he rushed from the room the instant he had announced it, evidently in fear of becoming unmanned, a thing he most of all dreaded.

We were meeting together daily for many weeks trying strenuously to promote through my personal acquaintance, which was large with leading gentlemen in Virginia, the election of a union majority to the then approaching Convention,[48] and I was honestly holding him out to them as a genuine second edition of Henry Clay who would surely find the means to avoid the need of fighting against the flag.

They had, somehow, managed to carry the election by an overwhelming majority, both of the popular

[48]Virginia proposed a peace congress to meet in Washington, February 4, 1861. Her Legislature called a convention to meet in Richmond on the same date. The congress, consisting of twenty-one states headed by Virginia, accomplished nothing. The convention sat until May watching events, and on April 17th, three days following President Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops, passed the ordinance of secession.

vote and of the members elected; but they well knew that mere declamation however brilliant, and glittering generalities however specious, would cut only a sorry figure when they should come to meet in joint debate in the sulphurous atmosphere of Richmond, where the torrent of hot and fiery eloquence would flood them. They foresaw a mighty and fearful struggle, and they wished to go full armed. A letter came at once asking for the best platform Mr. Lincoln could dare to give them, without of course losing his hold on the North.

That letter was submitted to him as soon as it came to my quarters at the hotel. It was received late at night. He asked to take it for reflection and promised his answer at eight o'clock in the morning.

Promptly to the hour he came stalking gloomily in, and without salutation sat down upon the bed and began to deliver himself with great solemnity in this wise: "You may tell them I will protect slavery where it exists; I can do that. You may tell them I will execute the fugitive slave law better than it ever has been; my people will let me do that. You may tell them they shall have all the offices south of Mason's and Dixon's line if they will take them. I will send nobody down there to interfere with them." He then remarked to me personally, and in a tone that pierced me almost like the faint wail of a suffering infant, and with a look of anguish I shall never forget: "But all of that will do no good. They have got themselves to where they might have the right to carry slavery into the territories, and I have lived

my whole life and fought this campaign; and I can't go back on myself."

Of course we both of us felt, and knew, it meant *War*. We were both of Southern blood and knew what the South would do. He went as he came, and I wept. Our minds had met. It was the first time either of us had allowed ourselves to look that awful *War* squarely in the face. He could have seen nobody to consult, and in so vital a matter he would wish to consult only himself.

From that hour he seemed to feel it was a race for Washington. He broke up his home, moved to the hotel, and rushed his preparations to depart. We took our meals at the same table, but Virginia was never again alluded to between us. He had asked me how many union men "per se" were running for that convention, and received for my answer, "One." He knew as soon as his answer reached Richmond that his ranks would melt into a mist. He supposed of course his answer had gone, but it had not.

I was in an agony of doubt. If I sent it they could and most likely would be in Washington first. It was so ripe they could take it almost without a gun. If I didn't answer the letter the worst would be inferred. The responsibility rested like a nightmare. It seemed as though if they got Washington, as they were getting everything else in the South, they would have the inside track both at home and abroad, and the chances all on their side.

A plan at last came in mind that worked like a charm. We held our last conference and the Vir-

ginians were told that he was starting to Washington and that he cordially invited as many of them as could to come to him as soon as they heard he was there.

Our ways parted at the station, and Washington was safe. They allowed him to get there first, and then one or two of them went, but the last chance for a successful rebellion had passed; it was a waste to fire a gun. Such was my confidence in the result thenceforth that I resigned myself like an infant falling into the arms of his nurse.

ROMANCE

Yet in all this plain history where is the Romance I promised? The Romance is in this and is double: first, that a man should have spent nine months of his life, and large amounts of his money, in traversing a continent, even to render a service the most vast and most vital to his country, for it was that or it was nothing; second, that it should pass wholly and absolutely unrequited and unacknowledged. Yet such is life. The man that sheds the most blood of his fellows is piled high under honors and is handed down in marble images for ages to admire; but the man that saves blood is cast into the mire. How can we remember the man who invented a process and took no patent therefor, when he furnished us no way to know him? It takes letters patent to stamp a name, and I never so much as stood for an office. I have no mean pleasure to recall my anxious months with Mr. Lincoln. My children not knowing the want of a country would rather have the money, and I get no thanks in the very house I tried to shelter.

This service to the cause of my section, if not of my country, it pleases me to believe, was not inconsiderable, and I have taxed my memory in vain for an instance of a man who has given nine months, and well-nigh all his money, to the advantage of his country, and without ever asking for payment in honors or emolument. It is true beyond question that Mr. Franklin by the power of his diplomacy in

France saved Washington from the fate of Mr. Davis, by sending the French army and navy to his rescue when resistance was no longer possible to the rebels of that day unaided. But Mr. Franklin was dressed in the insignia of the highest official position, with ample salary attached.

In this case it has to be remembered that the vote for Mr. Douglas was numerically larger than for Mr. Lincoln; that his followers were thrown into a small ferment; that with or without reason Mr. Davis was not without hopes of at least their neutrality, if not the assistance of not a few of them, as well as from Palmerston and Napoleon; that up to the day of the inauguration, Mr. Douglas had given no public indication as to what his attitude would be in case of a rupture between the sections.

Who shall say then that the possession of the Capitol on that day was not vital to the nation? Mr. Lincoln never ceased to think to the end of the war that it was still and always had been vital. Mr. Davis must have thought so from his many efforts at vast cost to obtain it. As it was, there were not a few Republicans of no mean consequence, not forgetting General Scott, who in the earlier stages advised strongly to let the erring sisters go in peace. Who shall say then if Governor Wine's plea had prevailed to take Washington before Lincoln reached it, and the Confederate Army had been in camp there, that Mr. Lincoln at the head of his prudent following of abolitionists would ever have accomplished his dislodgement, or his cause been gained and not been the "lost cause" of history?

Whose then do you think was the more blessed lot, that of Mr. Davis or mine? He left a place of the highest honor known among men; wasted his fortune and filled his section with premature graves to further a cause that was against the sense of the human race, and which Providence itself could no longer permit to exist. I spent my time, and no small share of my diminutive store, to save a country that is not even aware that I exist. He embittered his life and brought his own gray hairs down in sorrow to the grave. I filled my life with the sweetest memories that ever beguiled the tedious hours of declining life; I am surrounded by a wife and children, everyone exemplary members of God's holy church; I am possessed of vast and beautiful estates; and I can find no cause to envy the fame of even the immortal gods.

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